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**The Unconscious as a Rhetorical Factor: Toward a BurkeLacanian  
Theory and Method**

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**The Unconscious as a Rhetorical Factor: Toward a BurkeLacanian  
Theory and Method**

**by**

**Kevin Erdean Johnson, B.A., M.A.**

**Dissertation**

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## **Dedication**

For John L. Hufferd (A.K.A., “Huff”), my teacher and friend,  
for trust and encouragement in times of paranoia and helplessness;  
and for the “Hufferd Taught Kids,”  
for hope and inspiration in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds

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# **The Unconscious as a Rhetorical Factor: Toward a BurkeLacanian Theory and Method**

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This dissertation provides an exploration of the nature and scope of the category of the Unconscious as a necessary feature of rhetorical theory and criticism. In order to demonstrate the fundamental importance of the Unconscious to rhetorical theory and criticism, this dissertation focuses on Kenneth Burke's rhetorical theory of Dramatism. Burke is one of the most frequently cited theorists by rhetorical scholars, and offers a familiar site for rhetorical scholars to understand the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor. Burke formulated a theory of the Unconscious by drawing from Freudian psychoanalysis. Since Freud, Jacques Lacan has advanced and altered the Freudian understanding of the Unconscious. Therefore, by navigating the terrain of both Burkeian and Lacanian scholarship, this dissertation moves toward a BurkeLacanian theory and method to offer a more critical lexicon for the rhetorical study of the dialectical relationship between the conscious and Unconscious parts of the psyche. In doing so, this dissertation develops and answers the following questions: How can we theorize the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor? How is Burke's theory of the Unconscious rhetorically useful? How

might we understand Burke's theory of rhetoric differently and better if we read his Freudian influences through Lacanian scholarship on the Unconscious? How is a theory of the BurkeLacanian subject rhetorically useful? How does a BurkeLacanian theory of the Unconscious inform productive criticism?

This dissertation applies a BurkeLacanian theory of the Unconscious by introducing a rhetorical method called "Ideographic Cluster Quilting." This method moves toward the rhetorical study of texts as cultural psyches that are constructed from fragments of discourse that form around figures of abjection. In order to demonstrate the usefulness for studying Ideographic Cluster Quilts, this dissertation analyzes the cultural psyche that forms around the figure of the "illegal immigrant" as abject. In doing so, we gain an insight into the Unconscious hatred of humanity as the perverse core of American identity that qualifies which bodies do and do not matter. We will also gain an insight into the way nationalistic identities function within globalization by confining labor forces within national boundaries, while multinational corporations move freely around the world.



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## **Chapter One**

### **Kenneth Burke and Psychoanalytic Rhetoric**

This dissertation seeks to provide a critical lexicon for examining the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor. In doing so, psychoanalytic theorization of desire and enjoyment will contribute to the nature and scope of rhetorical theory and criticism. One could write several books highlighting the importance of conceptualizing the Unconscious within the major canonical works on rhetoric (“Plato and the Unconscious,” “Aristotle and the Unconscious,” “Cicero and the Unconscious,” etc.). However, the focus in this dissertation will be on the role of the Unconscious in Kenneth Burke’s rhetorical theory and methods of criticism. There are two reasons that I chose Burke as a focal point for the study of the Unconscious.

First, he is one of the most frequently cited scholars in the field of rhetorical studies and therefore most scholars may begin to understand the significance of the Unconscious through a common focal point. For example, Blakesley (2002) documented over 750 secondary sources utilizing and altering Burke’s theories of criticism. In addition, Burke is mentioned in nearly all books (if not all of them) on rhetorical theory and criticism that are used in the classroom. In short, to be a rhetorical scholar is to have at least some knowledge of Burke’s theories of rhetorical criticism. Therefore, focusing on Burke creates a common symbolic space where we can begin to understand the connection between rhetorical theory/criticism and the Unconscious.

The second reason for focusing on Burke is that he frequently wrote about Freud in his works and therefore offers an explicit site for the examination of the Unconscious in rhetorical theory. In Rhetoric and Religion, he credited Freud for “great contributions” and called him a “genius” (Burke, 1970, p. 265) In Language as Symbolic Action, he noted that Freud had “done well” (Burke, 1966, p. 66). And in his most lengthy praise of Freud, he wrote:

The reading of Freud I find suggestive almost to the point of bewilderment. Accordingly, what I should like to do would simply be to take representative excerpts of his work, copy them out, and write glosses upon them. Very often these glosses would be straight extensions of his own thinking. At other times they would be attempts to characterize his strategy of presentation with reference to interpretive method in general (Burke, 1957, p. 221).

Burke suggested that Freud’s methodology should have a profound effect on the literary critic. He noted that “the Freudian perspective was developed primarily to chart a psychiatric field rather than an aesthetic one<sup>1</sup>; but since we are here considering the analogous features of these two fields rather than their important differences, there would be glosses attempting to suggest how far the literary critic should go along with Freud and what extra-Freudian material he would have to add” (Burke, 1957, p. 221). There are at least two important things to note in relation to these praises of Freud’s work. First, Burke was heavily influenced by Freud’s writings. By his own admission, Burke wished to take certain fragments of Freud’s works and make them a direct part of his own work. Second, and perhaps more important than these praises, Burke demonstrated his reluctance to accept the totality of Freud’s work (and/or at the very least, he thought Freud’s works were incomplete).

Since Burke thought Freud's theories were simultaneously "great contributions" and problematic, he sought to make alterations to Freud's theories while maintaining a significant portion of them. That is, Burke did not want to throw Freud's proverbial baby out with the bathwater. Burke (1957) stated, "As we grow up, new meanings must either be engrafted upon old meanings (being to that extent double-entendres) or they must be new starts (hence, involving problems of dissociation)." He continued:

Revise Freud's terms, if you will. But nothing is done by simply trying to refute them or to tie them into knots. . . . If you would, accordingly, propose to chart this field by offering *better terms*, by all means do so. But *better terms* are the only kind of refutation here that is worth the trouble. . . . Freud's terminology is a dictionary, a lexicon for charting a vastly complex and hitherto largely uncharted field. You can't refute a dictionary. The only profitable answer to a dictionary is another one. (pp. 232-233)

With such thinking, Burke worked with and against the Freudian terminology. Specifically, Burke worked within the Freudian lexicon and offered "better terms" in his Dramatistic theory of rhetoric. Of course, the only way to examine the Burkeian concept of "better terms" is to explore the ways Burke both distanced and connected his Dramatistic theory with Freudian psychoanalysis and the Unconscious.

Unfortunately, few scholars have undertaken such an investigation. O'Leary and Wright (1995) provided one of the only pieces of work to systematically examine Burke's Freudian tendencies. The fact that this article was written more than ten years ago gives testimony for the neglect of scholars to further interrogate Burke's Freudian connections. Even more telling, according to O'Leary and Wright (1995), is that while numerous studies since 1963 mention Freud in relation to Burke there is no study that mentions or has more than a couple sentences about the connection. O'Leary and Wright

(1995) explained that such a gap in the research ought to be interrogated in an attempt to comprehend at least two of Burke's most important innovations—"his expansion of rhetoric to include Unconscious factors in the production and reception of discourse, and his substitution of 'identification' for 'persuasion' as the master term for the rhetorical process" (O'Leary and Wright, 1995, p. 104). They argued that these two innovations can be traced directly to Freud. While I will go into more detail in this dissertation regarding the contributions of O'Leary and Wright, I wish to at least highlight five of the main Burke/Freud linkages that they explored: (1) Freud linked the libido with Platonic Eros. O'Leary and Wright found this linkage in Burke's entire methodology. (2) Burke is critical of Freud in that he preserves the proportionality of motives and considers them in clusters rather than related to the erotic as effect is to cause. (3) Burke understood Freud's origins of human society as the primal horde to be a narrative analogy. He used this understanding to represent a pattern of motives that illuminates the mechanisms of group formation in a patriarchal power system. (4) Burke and Freud find that the sexual and the political are "inextricably intertwined." As such, the psychoanalytic linkages between Burke and Freud may be used productively to study public politics. And (5) Freudian psychoanalysis helps to understand Burke's concept of identification through loss.

Overington (1977) also made significant linkages between Burkeian and Freudian theory by focusing on the role of ironic technique. The ironic technique refers to Burke's account of psychoanalysis whereby "the therapist uncovers the patient's neurotic tendencies and effects a 'cure' by teaching the patient to use a different vocabulary to talk about them" (Overington, 1977, p. 139). The new therapeutic vocabulary works to create



a different moral *order* and “the analytic language works a cure as patients learn to talk about their problems in a new vocabulary with new moral values” (139). Overington (1977) noted that through this new vocabulary the patients “discover the therapeutic effect of a new set of motives which frees them from the old motivational framework and, thus, from the old neurotic determination” (p. 139). In this way, Burke criticized the Freudian psychoanalytic method as a moralizing agent.

Although O’Leary and Wright (1995) and Overington (1977) made important connections between Burke and Freud, there are many connections that remain underexplored. This is surprising given Burke’s continuous mention of Freud’s influence on his dramatistic theory. For example, Burke (1957) discussed in Philosophy of Literary Form the centrality of Freud’s influence in the conflict that exists between conscious and Unconscious factors—that this conflict is an internal private drama that is directly related to the outward public drama. More specifically, he noted in Freud that there was an essential private subject of conflict. He also noted in Marx the existence of a public subject in conflict. These two ideas combined to form a theory of Dramatism as the essence of humanity. And, more important for our purposes, he posited Dramatism at the heart of understanding symbolic action.

The influence of Freud is not merely found in Burke’s discussion of the mega-structure of Dramatism. Freud permeates nearly every aspect of the Burkeian landscape in explicit form. That is, Burke mentions Freud in nearly every concept that rhetorical scholars have employed in rhetorical criticism. While I will go into more detail later in this dissertation regarding the specific mentions of Freud, Burke (1957; 1966; 1968;

1969a; 1969b; 1970; 1984a; 1984b) mentioned the Freudian influence on the following concepts: rationalization vs. analysis, comic frame, audience persuasion, cluster criticism, surrealist ingredient in art, purposive forgetting, proportional strategy, matriarchal symbolizations, prayer and chart in literary criticism, occupational psychosis, scapegoating, perfection, terministic screens, the negative, the guilt cycle, beauty and sublimity, original sin, motive, and identification. Burke used all of these terms in his analysis of rhetoric and language. What follows in this dissertation is an exploration into the numerous Freudian influences in the work of Kenneth Burke. Such exploration will not only entail a tracing of Burke's psychoanalytic influence—I shall also update and alter Burkeian Dramatism by teasing out what I call a "BurkeLacanian" approach to the study of rhetoric.

The reason for a move toward a BurkeLacanian approach is that Lacanian scholarship has made significant alterations and extensions to Freudian psychoanalysis. While Burke began writing earlier than Jacques Lacan, both writers were at work simultaneously between approximately the 1950s through the 1970s. However, they both failed to mention each other explicitly in their writings. In the years since Burke quit writing, rhetorical scholarship has attended to the work of Lacanian scholars in an attempt to articulate a theory of subjectivity as it relates to rhetorical phenomena.<sup>2</sup> *Therefore, this dissertation poses the following question: How might we understand Burke's theory of rhetoric differently and better if we read his Freudian influences through Lacanian scholarship on the Unconscious? And, what contribution will such an understanding make to contemporary rhetorical scholarship where Lacanian*

*psychoanalysis is gaining more prominence? The central argument of this dissertation that will provide an answer to these questions is that the theorization of a BurkeLacanian subject creates a condition of possibility for rhetorical criticism to account for the (in)stability of symbolic order.*

A couple of clarifications need to be made before proceeding to explain and defend this central idea. One important clarification is that I use the term “Lacanian scholarship” instead of “Lacan” intentionally since my approach to Lacan is not exclusively of Lacan’s work, but rather a conglomeration of work that is heavily influenced by the thought of Lacan (the works of Žižek, Zupančič, Fink, Dean, etc.). In other words, I am not interested in fidelity to his works. The work in this dissertation is strongly informed by Lacan’s overall perspective on the human psyche as it strongly informs a theorization of the Burkeian Unconscious. Moreover, when mentioning the term “BurkeLacan(ian),” I am not referring to a theory/method that is properly Burkeian or Lacanian in the sense of fidelity to both of their works. Rather, I am referring to a new move toward a BurkeLacanian subject as our entrée into understanding the relation between the Unconscious and the rhetoric of human motives. This new concept of the BurkeLacanian subject will be further explained throughout the course of this dissertation.

## **CHAPTER PREVIEW**

The trajectory of this dissertation is to be read in two parts. Part one is made up of chapters two through four. These chapters are theoretical in their orientation and serve to clarify the constitutive features of the BurkeLacanian subject and Unconscious as well as

the importance of BurkeLacanian studies in the rhetoric of human motives. Chapters five and six constitute the second part of the dissertation. These chapters serve to argue for a BurkeLacanian rhetorical criticism that is rooted in the theoretical development of the BurkeLacanian subject and Unconscious.

The next chapter is an exploration of the importance of the Unconscious to rhetorical studies. There are a few purposes that this chapter seeks to accomplish. First, in order to study the Unconscious, the chapter outlines its nature and scope as a part of the dynamic human psyche. The chapter also highlights the importance of the study of the Unconscious as: (1) a factor in the construction of a society and government that makes decisions based on probable, not certain, truths, (2) a factor in the dialectical tension between “natural instincts” and “rational decision-making,” and (3) a component of intra-personal rhetoric. Finally, the chapter makes a case for the Unconscious as a valuable component in the further articulation of the interconnection between rhetoric and human motives by reviewing the ways contemporary rhetorical scholarship is currently using a psychoanalytic vocabulary to conceptualize the Unconscious.

Chapter three situates the Unconscious within Burkeian Dramatism. More importantly for the purposes of the overall scope of this dissertation, it explores the alterations and extensions that Lacanian scholarship offers the Freudian influenced Burkeian Unconscious. The principle focus of this chapter is on Burke’s essay in Language as Symbolic Action entitled “Mind, Body, and the Unconscious.” In this essay he both talks about the notion of repression as corresponding with his concept of the negative, and details eight varieties of the Unconscious as it pertains to symbolic action.

After detailing the Burkeian Unconscious, the chapter examines the contributions of Lacanian scholarship by analyzing the action/motion distinction, the negative/repression, and the eight varieties from a Lacanian influenced perspective. The chapter concludes by discussing the intersections of the BurkeLacanian Unconscious as it pertains to notions of purpose and responsibility. This conclusion is rooted in Burke's own connection of the Unconscious to purpose and responsibility.

Chapter four explains the constitutive features of what I call the "BurkeLacanian" subject. In order to outline the features, I review the Burkeian concept of the human being as "the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal, inventor of the negative, separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making, goaded by the spirit of hierarchy, and rotten with perfection" (Burke, 1966, p. 16). I also review the Lacanian concept of the barred subject, or split subject, whereby consciousness is displaced by an unconscious, which is to be understood as "another scene" about which consciousness or the ego can have no knowledge, and within which it cannot intervene or exert any control (Biesecker, 1998). Finally, I will navigate between the Burkeian and Lacanian subject in order to articulate a concept of the BurkeLacanian subject.

Chapter five begins the work of putting the BurkeLacanian rhetorical theory into the service of criticism. While there are many potential methods that spur from the BurkeLacanian subject, this chapter hones in on a method that I call "Ideographic Cluster Quilting." The concept of the "Ideographic Cluster Quilt," as well as the idea of a "text as cultural psyche" are the two major developments of this chapter. The Ideographic Cluster Quilt is an integration of three intersecting ideas: (1) the idea of ideological quilting in

Lacanian scholarship, (2) Michael Calvin McGee's idea of ideographs and their function as signifiers in an ideological quilt, and (3) Burke's method of cluster criticism. The concept of the "text as cultural psyche" is a way of structuring texts from fragments of discourse that form around figures of abjection. In order to develop this idea, this chapter examines the idea of the abject as a way of developing texts to be analyzed in terms of a cultural psyche in order to approach the problematic of text construction in light of the contemporary fragmentation of American culture.

Chapter six conducts a critical examination of the Ideological Cluster Quilt that develops around the figure of the "illegal immigrant" as abject. There are twelve major clusters of signifiers in the ideological quilt of the cultural psyche: "un-American," alien(iz)ation of the "enemy," "criminal," "economic deterioration," "public services," "infectiousness," "bestialization," "racialization," "God," "environmental contaminants," "overpopulation," and "pieces of shit and other expletives." This chapter analyzes each of these clusters of terms by using BurkeLacanian concepts as developed in the first five chapters to understand the nature and scope of the anti-illegal immigrant cultural psyche. Finally, chapter seven will conclude with a summary and some implications to the overall trajectory of the dissertation.

## **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The purpose for the narrative trajectory of the dissertation is to address a few research questions. The most general question pertains to the idea of the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor. Chapter two highlights a few of the potentially primitive theorizations in Plato and Aristotle concerning the relationship between the Unconscious and rhetoric.

However, the category of the Unconscious was never explicitly mentioned until the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Chapter two also reviews a few of the ways rhetorical scholars have thus far conceived of the Unconscious as it relates to rhetorical theory. Chapter two thus forms a general frame of reference for asking:

RQ1: How can we theorize the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor?

This dissertation will advance the idea of a BurkeLacanian Unconscious in order to attempt a way to work through such a theorization.

While this first question presumes a function of “ability,” this dissertation seeks to address three questions of “utility.” That is, whether or not we are *able* to theorize the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor, there are important questions regarding why we *should* attempt such a theorization. In order to address questions of utility, this dissertation will gauge the rhetorical usefulness of a BurkeLacanian theory by exploring the ways that such a theory may supplement and contribute to the works of rhetorical theorists and critics. In our alleged postmodern society of fragmented texts, “our decision as to what documents we’re going to focus on, what texts we’re going to focus on, and what fragments of that text have been influential puts us in a frame of mind so that we’re sensitive to that particular thing in our environment as it’s developing” (McGee, 1998, p. 84). As such, the rhetorical usefulness of a BurkeLacanian theory may be assessed by its ability to make important contributions to the way rhetorical scholars analyze fragmented texts. Since the focus of this dissertation is on a new BurkeLacanian rhetorical theory, I seek to address the following questions of utility:

RQ2: How is Burke’s theory of the Unconscious rhetorically useful?

RQ3: How is a theory of the BurkeLacanian subject rhetorically useful?

RQ4: How does a BurkeLacanian theory of the Unconscious inform productive criticism?

The final chapter will revisit each of these questions by focusing on the unique characteristics of a BurkeLacanian theory. That is, in revisiting the research questions, the final chapter will examine those characteristics of BurkeLacanian theory that contribute to contemporary rhetorical theory and criticism. Therefore, the final chapter will revisit these research questions by focusing on the characteristics of a BurkeLacanian theory that are absent in rhetorical theory and criticism. Since the pressing concern is to advance a theory of the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor, this dissertation will likely conclude by advancing the category of the Lacanian Real as the unique contribution to both Dramatistic theory, and a more general contemporary rhetorical theory and method of criticism. However, before being able to assess the uniqueness of this contribution, this dissertation must move toward an articulation of a BurkeLacanian theory and criticism. The next chapter will begin such a move.



## **NOTES TO CHAPTER ONE**

<sup>1</sup> We might be tempted to view this as a limitation in Freud's theory because of the failure to chart an aesthetic field. However, this is where Burke acknowledges the limitation in order to work through Freud's theory to find "what extra-Freudian material he would have to add" in order to more effectively use Freudian theory for literary criticism.

<sup>2</sup> Chapter two details a large portion of this attention.

**SECTION ONE**

**TOWARD A BURKELACANIAN THEORY**

## **Chapter Two**

### **Rhetoric and the Category of the Unconscious**

Can you BELIEVE the outrage over the Super Bowl halftime show? Janet Jackson actually moved her *body* during her performance. Not ONLY did she move her body, she moved her TORSO!!!! And that is not all. What I am about to tell you is a secret. Please do not tell anyone that I was paying attention to this. If you are ready for the secret, turn the page. . . .

**. . . Janet was shaking her torso WITH a boy named Justin  
Timberlake! Can you believe that she shook her torso AND she  
was on stage with A BOY!?!?!?. . . .**

. . . Can you guess what decade this might be from in the United States where such hypothetical gossiping might have been the reaction to the Super Bowl halftime show? That's right, the decade is the 1950s. Knowing a few factoids about entertainment and censorship in the 1950s allows us to imagine such a response to the Super Bowl halftime show should it have occurred in the 1950s. For instance, in 1955 officials in San Diego and police in Florida warned Elvis Presley that if he moved *at all* during his local performances, he would be arrested on obscenity charges. In 1957, Elvis appeared on the Ed Sullivan Show where producers instructed camera operators to show Elvis from only the waist up. The censorship of Elvis' lower body was due to public controversy over his previous appearances where he was shown thrusting his pelvis during his performances.

Fast forward to 2004, and we are confronted with a very similar reaction to the Super Bowl halftime show where Janet Jackson performed with Justin Timberlake. Prior to their taking the stage, Nelly and Kid Rock both made appearances to open for them. Nelly sang "Hot in Herre" where he encourages a(ny) woman/women to take off all their clothes. Kid Rock sang his song entitled "Cowboy," which included the lyrics "And I'm a Kid Rock it up and down your block with a bottle of scotch and watch lots of crotch" and "Get a map to the stars, find Heidi Fleiss and if the price is right I'm gonna make my bid boy." When Janet and Justin took the stage, Justin concluded the performance with the standard lyric to his song which exclaims "gonna have you naked by the end of this song."

And then IT happened. The event known to many as "Nipplegate" began when Justin ripped a flap off of Janet's top to expose her naked breast to 95 million viewers of

the show. Apparently it is alright to behave toward each other as though they are one minute from entering a pay by the hour motel, encouraging women to take off all their clothes, and talking about staring at crotch and hiring hookers—but show a nipple and the world is in a frenzy. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chief Michael Powell issued a statement stating that he was “outraged at what [I] saw during the halftime show of the Super Bowl. Like millions of Americans, my family and I gathered around the television for a celebration. Instead, that celebration was tainted by a classless, crass and deplorable stunt. Our nation’s children, parents and citizens deserve better” (“FCC Chief,” 2004). Leslie Ann Wade, spokesperson for CBS noted that “CBS deeply regrets the incident” (“FCC Chief,” 2004). After many complaints from viewers, the FCC upheld a decision finding that Janet’s “wardrobe malfunction” violated the broadcast smut rules and fined CBS \$550,000 for the violation.

Nipplegate is a dynamic site of study for rhetorical scholars because there are a plethora of methods that may be used to study the single event of a flashed nipple. For example, we might examine Nipplegate using Bitzer’s rhetorical situation—the *exigency* as the “indecent” material shown on television, the *audience* being those that were offended by the showing of the nipple, and CBS being *constrained* by their being framed as partially responsible for showing the nipple. We might conduct an ideological criticism by examining the profits made from Nipplegate by the Google corporation<sup>1</sup> and the profits made by CBS and MTV (both part of the Viacom-Infinity empire)—we might conclude that this was a part of the capitalist logic. We might conduct a fantasy theme analysis of web blogs to find the shared fantasies of people who viewed the half time

show. We might conduct a black feminist criticism by looking for the ways people demonize Janet's black femaleness while simultaneously protecting Justin's white male privilege. We might examine the statements politicians made about the show by running them through DICTION and find the frequency of certain words and their specific verbal categories (activity, certainty, variety, self-reference, etc.; see Hart, 2000). We could do a narrative criticism of the stories that are told about the half time show by asking if such narratives spring from a Master Narrative, what propositional content the narratives are designed to reveal and/or mask, and how faithfully the narratives deal with their subject matter.

In short, the rhetorical discipline might conduct a host of studies based on the event that *IS* the flashing of a nipple to millions of viewers. However, these studies will fall silent for explaining why Nipplegate was an event to begin with. That is, they will fail to answer the following question: *how* does a nipple become more than just a nipple? Or, in the case of Elvis, when does a body movement become more than just a body movement? A homological analysis might find the same formal question in relation to Attorney General John Ashcroft's own version of Nipplegate. After giving many speeches in front of "The Spirit of Justice," he decided to spend \$8,650 to have her breasts covered by a blue curtain (Burger, 2002). And, not surprisingly, many people expressed their disappointment. For example, one newspaper noted, "The mighty U.S. military may have liberated the women of Afghanistan from their burqas, but at least one woman in official Washington has been ordered covered from head to toe" ("The Price," 2002). So again, we might do all sorts of rhetorical analyses about the covering of the

bare-breasted statue in the Department of Justice. But this brings us back to the question—*how* does a nipple become more than just a nipple in the first place? Why are rhetorical scholars generally ill equipped to handle this question? The question about how objects become more than just objects is fundamentally a concern for rhetorical scholars since it functions as the basis by which rhetoric becomes necessary—how objects become the locus of rhetoric is itself a fundamentally rhetorical question. To be fair, there are some instruments that exist for rhetorical scholars to begin approaching an answer.

For instance, Derrida's reading of Marx's commodity fetish might begin to illuminate an answer. After all, the very premise of the fetish is that the fetishized thing becomes more than just a thing. Derrida (1994) used the example of a table prior to its entrance into commodity status: "the wood remains wooden when it is made into a table" (150). The table and wood is markedly different when it becomes a commodity. When a table is a commodity, it goes out on the market and "plays actor and character at the same time" (Derrida, 2004, p. 150). In short, the table moves from being merely a table to more than a table—the table becomes fetishized in the form of a commodity by *becoming* more than just a table. Still, why the "becoming" of a commodity? What is it that motivates the fetish? What is it about the human subject that a table is able to be more than just a table? Or, what motivates a person to make out a nipple to be more than just a nipple?<sup>2</sup>

In this dissertation, I argue that rhetorical studies might better attempt to answer questions of motivation by updating theories of the desiring human subject. In order to approach the question of human motivation, this chapter focuses specifically on the category of the Unconscious as an important characteristic for rhetorical scholars to



study. Specifically, this chapter argues that if we are to have a comprehensive theory for how a thing becomes more than just a thing (a desired thing), we need to study the Unconscious since it is an important characteristic of the human psyche that influences desire. Currently, there are two primary means by which U.S. rhetorical studies have approached the desiring human subject. The privileged rhetorical approach to desire is the conception of the human subject as a principally *rational* animal. A less popular approach consists of the study of the role of a human *unconscious* in the study of human desire. This chapter will survey the nature and scope of the Unconscious in order to make the case that rhetorical scholars should dedicate more attention to the study of the Unconscious and its relation to human desire. Such analysis will form a context for the articulation of a specific BurkeLacanian rhetorical approach to the study of the Unconscious. By providing context, this chapter will function as a backdrop in order to assess the research questions advanced in chapter one.

## **DEFINING THE UNCONSCIOUS**

Smith's (1998) book entitled Rhetoric and Human Consciousness, is a prime example of the study of human desire (and its relation to/with persuasion) from the basis of human subjectivity as a principally rational subjectivity. In providing a case for the study of rhetoric, Smith (1998) argued that "the instability of the world, the elusive nature of the truth, and the diversity of audiences in the public and private arena ensure that the practice of rhetoric will be around as long as humans are. It will continue to reflect our evolving *consciousness* as long as we give equal voice to all members of society" (397). The connection between human consciousness and the human subject is that human

consciousness is *subject* to externalities that provide the impetus for the evolution Smith described (i.e., the externality of the Unconscious to which consciousness is subjected). Smith (1998) is not alone in his focus on the evolving connection between rhetoric and human consciousness. In fact, most other narratives about “the” history of rhetoric emphasize the rational-conscious study of the human subject.<sup>3</sup>

But what precisely is the problem with this emphasis on the conscious part of the human animal? Is not the conscious part of the mind a significant *part* of the desiring animal? There is little doubt that this is so. But to say that the conscious part of the mind is significant is not to imply that the unconscious part of the mind is insignificant in the study of the human subject and rhetoric. Before detailing why the unconscious part of the mind is important to the study of rhetoric, I might pause to clarify what exactly I mean by the term “the Unconscious.”

There are at least two conceptions of the unconscious: the “adjectival” and the “topographical.” Freud (1995) defined the adjectival conception of the unconscious as “acts which are merely latent, temporarily unconscious, but which differ in no other respect from conscious ones” (172). These acts, thoughts, or ideas are capable of being known and present no difficulty to the subject. Gunn and Treat (2005) argued that in the adjectival sense, “all rhetorical criticism trucks in the unconscious insofar as the point of criticism is to bring latent rhetorical elements into the conscious awareness of readers or hearers. Indeed, interpretation as such betokens the dialectic of the manifest and the latent” (150).

A second conception of the unconscious is the usage of the term as a noun to refer to a psychical topography. When used in the nounal sense, we cannot know the contents of the unconscious topography except in terms of its effects on conscious life. This is the region of the human subject of repressed content. In this psychoanalytic register, this inaccessible arena of the psyche, is one of the systems in which repressed materials (i.e., traumatic and/or guilty ideas, thoughts, desires) reside, continuously denied access to the other systems of the preconscious and consciousness by censoring agencies. Repressed material in the unconscious is not, however, passive, as is sometimes assumed. Rather, repressed material is constantly and ceaselessly attempting to re-enter consciousness (termed ‘the return of the repressed’), but can succeed in doing so only in disguise. It is in this topographical sense that this dissertation will use the term “Unconscious.”

## **THE UNCONSCIOUS AS COUNTERPART TO RHETORIC AND HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS**

The Unconscious is important to the study of rhetorical motive because it is the kernel of the conscious symbolic world. Let us take, for example, Smith’s (1998) three primary justifications for the study of rhetoric:

First, for the most part, the decisions that are made by societies and governments are based on probable, not certain, truths. Therefore, we need to be persuaded to accept them. Second, what makes us human also makes us rhetorical. We are decision-making creatures capable of overruling our own instincts. Developing the habit of making good decisions is critical to human existence. . . . Third, the need for rhetoric grows out of the fact that the human mind does not tolerate that which cannot be explained. For the most part, the human mind is offended by the irrational, the absurd, and the chaotic. (p. 5)

The study of rhetoric (within the Communication Studies discipline) is often justified by these three fundamental arguments. Thus, to explain the importance of studying the Unconscious, we can explore the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor in each of these justifications.

### **Persuasion's necessity because of probable decision-making**

There are at least four points of relation between the Unconscious and this first justification—the Unconscious relates to “decision,” the “social” (society), the establishment of “government,” and “probable truths.” While all of these relations will be further articulated in this dissertation, it is worth briefly highlighting the connections here. In explaining an ethics of decision, Ronell (2004) wrote that “no decision is strictly possible without the experience of the undecidable. To the extent that one may no longer be simply guided—by Truth, by light or logos—decisions have to be made” (p. 58). What Ronell refers to here is the purely subjective “decision/choice” that is made in the face of the lack of a “logos” driven truth. The Unconscious is the locus of the undecidable content of the psyche since it contains those elements that are repressed in the moment of decision. Thus, it is of fundamental importance to the study of rhetoric because it provides the backdrop by which rhetorical “decisions” are made. This idea will be further explored in chapter four regarding the relationship between Lacan’s concept of the quilting point (point de caption) and repression.

The Unconscious is also of fundamental importance to the creation of a “social” sphere that constitutes “society.”<sup>4</sup> Specifically, myths and rituals constitute society and function as a barrier to encountering the repressed content that binds a society together.

One of the ways myth bonds a person and a collective is through the physical enactment of myth-ritual (Campbell, 1972). Myth impresses upon individuals the need for and “efficiency” of ritual because it “safeguards and enforces morality” (Malinowski, 1962, p. 19). Rites and rituals like birth, death, and initiation into adulthood accompany important events in human life (Cassier, 1979). Participating in societal rituals “affirms the bond between person and group and culture, and the place of the individual within the larger culture. The inability to participate in community rituals threatens the bond between culture and the individual” (Asenas, 2002). The Unconscious serves as the repressed core of societies that functions to create the very conditions of myths and rituals in society. Žižek (2000a) explained that “hypocrisy is the basis of civilization. Rituals and appearances do matter. If you drop the appearances and go to the thing itself, it’s sometimes pretty horrible” (p. 1). If myths and ritual are rhetorical, then the study of the Unconscious repressed content of the myths and rituals helps to facilitate a richer understanding of rhetorical “order” in society.

Moreover, the establishment of a government that regulates “order” in a society is necessarily established and maintained through a distance between governmental and societal myths and rituals on the one hand, and their horrific core on the other. The relation between “governmental decisions” and the Unconscious may be grasped through Althusser’s (2001) distinction between repressive and ideological State apparatuses. Althusser (2001) advanced the idea of the State as a principally repressive apparatus: “the definition of the State as a class State, existing in the repressive State apparatus, casts a brilliant light on all the facts observable in the various orders of repression whatever their

domains” (p. 92). What distinguishes the Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) from the Repressive State Apparatus (RSA) is that “the RSA functions ‘by violence,’ whereas the ISAs function ‘by ideology’” (Althusser, 2001, p. 97). Of course, this distinction is not quite so clear. For instance, the “RSA functions massively and predominantly *by repression* (including physical repression), while functioning secondarily by ideology.” Inversely, “the ISAs function massively and predominantly *by ideology*, but they also function secondarily by repression, even if ultimately, but only ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic”<sup>5</sup> (Althusser, 2001, pp. 97-98). Smith’s (1998) justification for the study of rhetoric based on governmental decision-making may thus be joined with Althusser’s RSA and ISAs in order to justify the study of the Unconscious in rhetorical studies since the Unconscious provides the conditions of “dis-order” by which governmental decisions are meant to cure/re-solve in an ideological and/or repressive manner.

Put another way, the Unconscious creates the very potentiality for non-truth as a precursor to the “probable, not certain, truths” that “we need to be persuaded to accept.” Therefore, “government” and “societal” decisions are rooted in a radical Void of subjectivity that must remain repressed against the backdrop of the “probable, not certain, truths” of rhetoric. The ability for people to be persuaded to accept governmental and societal decisions attests to the dependence on a symbolic mediator to sustain the appearance of the smooth functioning of things. In order for this appearance to be maintained, the symbolic mediator must repress content that threatens dis-order. As Catlaw (2006) put it, “the Symbolic deals with uncertainty; it registers ‘facts’” (p. 267).

The authority of the Symbolic is what allows us to say “I know very well what my eyes see or my head tells me, but nevertheless I will trust what the institution says” (Žižek, qtd. in Catlaw, 2006, p. 267). Symbolic authority in the form of governmental and societal decisions exist to “fix” what Fink (1995) called the “kinks in the Symbolic order” (p. 30). The “return of the repressed” from the Unconscious is precisely what serves as a precondition for the “kinks” in symbolic order that make governmental and societal decisions attain the status of “probable truths.” The Unconscious is, therefore, both inside and outside of language. It is in language insofar as it forms a disruption (i.e., an exigence) that requires the re-arranging of language in order to “come to terms” with the exigence. It is outside language insofar as it is, at least for a certain length of time, repressed *by* language. Taken together then, we find that the study of the nature and scope of the Unconscious is integral to a more thorough account of the ways people are persuaded to accept the decisions that are made by societies and governments that are based on probable, not certain, truths.

### **The human animal overrules its own instincts**

If the Unconscious part of the human psyche is responsible for many of the human instincts<sup>6</sup> that we are capable of overruling, then what is the human instinct to begin with? Do we understand human instinct as that which is opposed to rational decision-making? One of the most popular arguments we hear in any political discussion is the question of whether a given policy will work or not because of “human nature.” But what is this “human nature” that has the ability to overrule our “rational” decision-making? “Human nature” and “rational decision-making” exist here in dialectical

opposition in much the same way as the dialectical relation between the Unconscious and conscious parts of the psyche. The necessity for rhetoric to overrule natural instincts is the attempt of human “consciousness” to regulate the excesses of “human nature.”

In terms of the justification for studying rhetoric as a way of overruling our “natural instincts,” we might study the Unconscious to gain a better idea of the nature and scope of the excesses of “evil”<sup>7</sup> as it pertains to/with rational-conscious rhetoric. Žižek (2002a) wrote that “what the reign of law has to tame and subdue is not ‘nature’ but the excess of Evil by means of which nature surpasses itself into culture” (p. 206). Here, Žižek is invoking Kant’s opposition between a person’s “unruliness” and animals “instinctual stability.” Kant (1899) wrote: “Owing to his natural love of freedom it is necessary that man should have his natural roughness smoothed down; with animals, their instinct renders this unnecessary” (p. 5). Žižek (2002a) is quick to point out that, “The Freudian name for this ‘unruliness,’ for this self-destructive freedom which marks the radical break from natural instincts, is of course *death-drive*. The condition of the passage from nature to culture is thus an uncanny inner split of nature itself into nature as balanced circuit regulated by instincts and nature as ‘unruliness’ that has to be tamed by law” (pp. 206-207). The Unconscious refers to this place where the “unruly” part of the psyche is repressed by the “rhetorical decisions” that serve to establish order. Thus, the Unconscious is important to study in order to question the potential for not only decision-making creatures to overrule their own natural instincts, but for the ability of “natural instincts” to overrule the rationality of the decision making creature.



## **The mind's inability to tolerate the unexplainable**

If rhetoric grows out of being intolerant of the unexplainable, then there is a fundamental co-relationship between the repressive “instinct” and the “growth” of rhetoric. That is, if Freud teaches us anything, it is that the intolerance for the “irrational,” “absurd,” and the “chaotic” is that which gives rise to the repressive mechanism in the human mind. The intolerance that results in repression never goes away—it is stored in the Unconscious.<sup>8</sup> The Unconscious is thus of central importance to the epistemological foundation of the “irrational,” “absurd,” and/or “chaotic.” How does the human subject come to know the “irrational,” “absurd,” and “chaotic”? To take this question a bit further, how does the “irrational,” “absurd,” and “chaotic” become “irrational,” “absurd,” and “chaotic”? That is, what are the conditions of existence for the “irrational,” “absurd,” and “chaotic”? The Unconscious is an important site for the scope of these questions since it is a fundamental part of the human psyche that is in direct relation to/with that which resists symbolization. Thus, the Unconscious is worthy of rhetorical study since it is that which threatens the explainable when the repressed content erupts into consciousness. This observation is in line with Kenneth Burke's (1969a) reading of the Freudian psyche: “what could be more profoundly rhetorical than Freud's notion of a dream that attains expression by stylistic subterfuges designed to evade the inhibitions of a moralistic censor? . . . The ego with its id confronts the superego much as an orator would confront a somewhat alien audience, whose susceptibilities he must flatter as a necessary step towards persuasion” (pp. 37-38). In other words, the Unconscious is a necessary component to intra-personal rhetoric that represses the intolerable.

If these justifications seem a bit theoretical at the moment, let us attempt to posit a simple example to display the relationship between rhetoric and the Unconscious. There is much research to suggest that Unconscious factors may make people more prone to being persuaded to engage in certain types of behaviors. For instance, men who have been sexually assaulted have a high incidence of alcohol and drug use. The probability for alcohol problems in adulthood is about 80% for men who have experienced sexual abuse, as compared to 11% for men who have never been sexually abused. Those that have been sexually abused are more likely to deny that their alcohol problems are related to their being sexually abused—the trauma is repressed (Carlson & Ruzek, 2005). That is, there is something about the sexual abuse that gets repressed (i.e., the trauma that resists symbolization) and stored in the Unconscious that may influence conscious behavior.

But what is the connection to/with rhetorical studies? Aristotle (2000) spoke of pathos being possible by a person being already in a certain mood: “The man who *desires* and is hopeful (supposing the thing in prospect to be pleasant), thinks that it will be, and that it will be good; the man who is indifferent, or who feels a difficulty, thinks the opposite” (p. 161). Since the overwhelming majority of sexually abused males have problems with alcohol as a “hope” for being pleasant, they are more likely to be persuaded to go out for a night on the town. Thus, since Post Traumatic Stress Disorder occurs with a traumatic encounter with repressed content, the existence of such Unconscious material may influence the way people are persuaded to engage in *particular* (going out on the town, not just drinking in general) behaviors. In the end, the Unconscious may influence the “state of mind” (precursor to pathos) that is the precursor

to persuasion (going out on the town that night) in general while also functioning as an effect on affectability.

## **EVIDENCE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS AS A RHETORICAL FACTOR**

Still, we might ask how do we know that the Unconscious exists in a way that could influence our understanding of rhetoric? There are multiple ways that we know that the Unconscious exists—most of which involve psychic events that we have no conscious control over. We come to know the Unconscious through its effects: through the logic of symptoms and dreams, through jokes and Freudian slips, through the structures of children's play, and, most crucially, in the mutually affective relationship which human beings develop as a result of their past total helplessness and dependence on another person (Wright, 1994). Indeed, for Freud (1995) proof of Unconscious existence is drawn from three experiences: first, when a fully-formed idea or thought occurs to one suddenly—such as “the solution of some difficult intellectual problem which has previously for a time baffled one's efforts.” Secondly, it can be discerned in slips of the tongue whereby one verbalizes a previously Unconscious thought. Finally, evidence of the Unconscious topography is found in the phenomenon of post-hypnotic suggestion, whereby a previously hypnotized person performs a behavior for reasons she is not consciously aware of as a result of a prior suggestion by the hypnotist (e.g., the humorous antics performed by ‘volunteers’ in a stage hypnotist's show). Lacan (1981) extended our knowledge of the existence of an Unconscious by studying discontinuity. He posited that discontinuity “is the essential form in which the Unconscious first appears to us as a phenomenon—discontinuity, in which something is manifested as a vacillation” (p. 25).

He continued by asserting that people “will grant [him] that the *one* that is introduced by the experience of the Unconscious is the *one* of the split, of the stroke, of rupture. . . . Rupture, split, the stroke of the opening makes absence emerge—just as the cry does not stand out against a background of silence, but on the contrary makes the silence emerge as silence”<sup>9</sup> (Lacan, 1981, p. 26).

The existence of an Unconscious as a part of the mind that can influence our understanding of rhetoric is also made apparent by other disciplines that study the physical nature of the brain. The existence of an Unconscious part of the brain in other disciplines provokes rhetorical scholars to move it beyond merely a useful “construct.” Indeed, such studies indicate that the Unconscious is not necessarily a construct at all, but rather, a part of the very materiality of the human body.<sup>10</sup> The materiality of the human body is useful to scholars of rhetoric since it often forms the basis by which rhetoric responds/reacts. In other words, there exists much evidence of neuro-physiological influence on rhetorical constructions of reality. It is worth noting at least three different studies to show the way an Unconscious may influence rhetoric in human consciousness.

### **Ideomotor action**

Ideomotor action is responsible for the energy that is produced by the brain on an unconscious level and is manifest in the physical world despite conscious attempts to control it. For instance, the movement of pointers on Ouija boards, of a facilitator’s hands in communication, of hands and arms in applied kinesiology, and of some behaviors attributed to hypnotic suggestion, may be the result of the brain’s production of ideomotor action. Hyman (1999) demonstrated the seductive influence of ideomotor

action by producing such appliances as the “Toftness Radiation Detector” (used by chiropractors) and “black boxes” used in medical radiesthesia and radionics (popular with naturopaths to harness “energy” used in diagnosis and healing.) Hyman (1999) also hypothesize that such things as Qi Gong and “pulse diagnosis,” popular in both Traditional Chinese Medicine and Ayurvedic medicine as practiced by Deepak Chopra, are explained in terms of ideomotor action and require no mythical or magical elements (like chi) as many people suggest. Rather, these elements are a result of the physical production of energy by the brain.

### **LSD research**

By using LSD, many people experience events that have been repressed in their mind. The repressed content literally returns while taking LSD. LSD researchers are able to determine this by reports from subjects who explain that while under the influence of LSD they have experienced “flashbacks” to previous horrific moments in their life—these are known as a particular type of “bad trip.” Grof (1994) conducted the “LSD Experiments” to research the potential use of LSD in psychotherapy. While there is a lot of controversy about using the drug as a form of treatment, there is little doubt that the drug triggers a part of the mind that occasionally caused repressed traumatic material in the mind to re-surface into consciousness.<sup>11</sup> While the category of repression might refer to more than just previous real traumatic moments in one’s life, LSD research detects this important aspect of repression (as does research on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).<sup>12</sup>

## **Unconscious vision**

Ro, Shelton, Lee, and Chang (2004) found extrageniculate<sup>13</sup> mediation of Unconscious vision in transcranial magnetic stimulation-induced blindsight. This research suggests that the brain sees what the conscious mind does not. To come to this conclusion, Ro et al. (2004) zapped the brains with a pulse of energy (called transcranial magnetic stimulation) of “healthy” (and brave/foolish) volunteers to temporarily shut down the part of the brain that processes visual information (the visual cortex). The volunteers stared at a computer screen during this moment of blindness while a simple image flashed for an instant. Quick flashes of pictures were then displayed on the computer screen. The volunteers were asked if they had seen a horizontal line or vertical line in one test, and a red or green dot in the other. All nine of them said they had seen nothing each time. When asked to guess what they’d seen, they did significantly better than 50-50; seeing the correct line as a blind witness 75 percent of the time and the correct color 81 percent of the time. Ro et al. (2004) found that even though the primary visual cortex was temporarily shut down, the detailed visual information was still being processed unconsciously. Since then, numerous other studies have confirmed similar findings (Boyer, 2005; Jolij & Lamme, 2005).

To this point, we have established a few things. First, there is little discussion in rhetorical studies regarding the spectral content of objects (how things become more than “mere” things). Second, a major reason for being unable to discuss what motivates the fetish, or how desire exists, is due in large part to the privileging of a rational-conscious human subject of rhetoric rather than a split subject (between conscious and

Unconscious) of rhetoric. Third, theorizing the human Unconscious as it relates to/with human motivation is significant for the study of rhetoric. Finally, we established the likely existence of a human Unconscious that is evidenced by studies on its relation to/with human consciousness.

## **RHETORICAL SCHOLARSHIP ON THE UNCONSCIOUS**

Still, it would be unfair to imply that rhetorical scholarship has completely failed to attempt a theorization of the Unconscious. To be fair, rhetorical theorists have at least alluded to what might be conceived of as “primitive” theories of the relation between the Unconscious and rhetoric. While some may believe that the Unconscious escaped everyone’s radar until Freud, this belief is not rooted in a generous reading of classical philosophical texts that preceded Freud. Ultimately, this dissertation will seek to contribute a deeper comprehension of the usefulness of the Unconscious to rhetorical studies by specifically focusing on the updating and altering of the Freudian foundations of Kenneth Burke’s concept of rhetoric. While this will be the predominant focus of this dissertation, the articulation of a theory of the Unconscious in contemporary Burkeian scholarship is part of a larger project of articulating the nature and scope of the Unconscious in the broader landscape of rhetorical theory. I want to suggest that the type of work that this dissertation shall do with Burke’s rhetorical theory on the Unconscious may also be done with other canonical works on rhetoric to highlight the importance of the Unconscious to rhetorical theory in general. In order to accomplish this larger task, I will trace at least a few “beginning points” that suggest the possibility of undertaking such a task within both classical and contemporary rhetorical theory.

## Classical rhetorical theory

In terms of classical rhetorical theory, there are two primary texts that are particularly important since they primitively theorize an Unconscious—The Republic by Plato, and On Prophetic Dreams by Aristotle. In The Republic, Plato (1992) wrote:

The beastly and savage part (of the mind). . . endeavors to sally forth and satisfy its own natural instincts. . . , there is nothing it will not venture to undertake as being released from all sense of shame and all reason. It does not shrink from attempting to have intercourse with one's mother, or with any man, god, or animal. It is ready for any foul deed of blood . . . and falls short of no extreme of mindlessness and shamelessness . . . there is in every one of us, even those who seem to be most moderate, a type of desire that is terrible, wild and lawless. (242)<sup>14</sup>

One might interpret the wild and lawless part of the human mind to reside in the Unconscious, for as previously noted, it is the repressed content stored in the Unconscious that returns to haunt consciousness. There is nothing more terrible, wild, and lawless than the haunting return of the repressed. But what does this have to do with rhetoric for Plato? One of Plato's (2000) central arguments is that rhetoric does not have a subject matter of its own. Thus, Plato cannot get at an essential thing he calls rhetoric because it is always elusive (i.e., "terrible, wild, and lawless"<sup>15</sup>). The Unconscious, like rhetoric, does not have a subject matter of its own. The Unconscious is vulnerable to nothing. Rather, it is consciousness that is always already vulnerable to the return of the repressed content. Thus, for Plato, this return is the "type of desire" that may be central to rhetoric.

Aristotle also may have suggested a vital role of the Unconscious in rhetoric. In On Prophetic Dreams, he wrote:



...it is not improbable that some of the presentations which come before the mind in sleep may even be causes of the actions cognate to each of them. For as when we are about to act [in waking hours], or are engaged in any course of action, or have already performed certain actions, or performing them, in a vivid dream; the cause whereof is that the dream-movement has had a way paved for it from the original movements set up in the daytime; exactly so, but conversely, it must happen that the movements set up first in sleep should also prove to be starting points of actions to be performed in the daytime, since the recurrence by day of the thought of these actions also has had its way paved for it in the images before the mind at night. Thus then it is quite conceivable that some dreams may be tokens and causes [of future events]. (Aristotle, 1965, p. 203)

For Aristotle (2000), rhetoric is “the faculty of discerning in every case the available means of persuasion” (146). For Aristotle, the “movements first set up in sleep” may “pave a way” for the rhetor to persuade the dreamer by tapping into Unconscious desires. Aristotle leaves open the possibility for the Unconscious to be an important part to the study of discerning means of persuasion by noting that it is “quite conceivable” for the content in the Unconscious (i.e., dreams) to be a cause of behavior to form an “event” in the daytime.

### **Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung**

In terms of contemporary rhetorical theory, scholars largely agree with the existence and importance of an Unconscious and its relation to/with rhetoric. Contemporary scholars study the Unconscious by primarily relying on the theories of Freud and Jung. For instance, Smith (1998) noted at least nine contributions of Freud to rhetorical theory which include the following concepts: id, ego, superego, projection, denial, isolation, rationalization, repression, and sublimation.

In a turn to Jungian psychoanalysis to explain the Unconscious, Rushing and Frentz (1991) argued that “Jung’s amendments to Freud’s model of the psyche are

improvements because they grant the Unconscious an existence and a moral potential not totally derived from material circumstances” (389). The primary focus of Jungian rhetorical criticism is an examination of cultural narratives. Rushing and Frenz (1991) explained that analyzing narratives from a Jungian perspective “requires experiencing narratives ‘by the personality of the whole,’ living with them on an Unconscious as well as a conscious level, and then attempting to communicate something of the ‘quality of feeling for the nature of human beings’ contained in them to one’s audience” (p. 403).<sup>16</sup> Jung rejected the empirical objectivism of Freud and turned to mythology and symbolism to unlock the secrets of the mind. He divided symbols into four groups: (1) symbols of origination including but not limited to mothers, females, caves, and past time; (2) symbols of oneness or unity including circles, stones, and hoops, (3) symbols of transcendence including champions, idols, rebirth, ritual, and flight, and (4) symbols of spirituality including energy forces, springs, and light. One of the shortcomings of Jungian psychoanalysis is the failure to theorize the *formation* of human motivation in connection with symbols and motivation.

### **Jacques Lacan**

In more recent developments, a few scholars have attempted to talk about the role of motivation and the Unconscious by utilizing the contributions of Jacques Lacan for rhetorical methodology. Without going into great detail here, there are at least three significant contributions that Lacan made to our understanding of the Unconscious and motivation: (1) the creation of three distinct registers that make up the human psyche (Symbolic, Imaginary, Real), (2) the movement away from Freudian psychotherapeutic

treatment, and (3) a more descriptive vocabulary to talk about human desire. Chapters three and four will explain Lacan's theory of the Unconscious and motivation in much greater depth. What I will do here is provide a brief overview of the basic features of Lacanian theory that are most commonly used in rhetorical scholarship, while chapters three and four will move toward a BurkeLacanian theory that will expand on these features.

For Lacan, what we call "reality" is articulated through signification (the Symbolic) and the characteristic patterning of images (Imaginary). Daly (2004) stated that "while the symbolic is in principle open-ended, the imaginary seeks to domesticate this open-endedness through the imposition of a fantasmatic landscape that is peculiar to each individual. In other words, the imaginary arrests the symbolic around certain fundamental fantasies" (6). The register of the Real is in opposition to the Symbolic and Imaginary. According to Žižek (2004a), "the problem with the Real is that it happens and that's the trauma. The point is not that the Real is impossible, but that the impossible is Real" (70). The Real cannot be directly represented, but can be alluded to in horror-excess. The critical difference between the Real and the real is that the Real prevents the symbol from becoming itself. When the Real traverses the fantasy of the subject, the subject is forced to go through a symbolic "re-birth."

There have been several scholars to suggest that these Lacanian registers are important in the study of rhetoric and motivation. Biesecker (1998) argued that the Lacanian Real is of central importance to the Lacanian vocabulary that will create for rhetorical scholars "a powerful new critical lexicon that, when inhabited well, helps us

make sense out of a symbolic formation without reducing all sense either to it or to its positive relations” (227). In terms of the Imaginary, Gunn (2003a) argued for a Lacanian understanding of the Imaginary as it relates to/with rhetorical invention as “a theoretical project that may reconcile or at least manage the tension between criticism that relies on a traditional, self-directed rhetorical agent and that which assumes a ‘decentered,’ posthumanist subject” (42). The Imaginary register is where the work of fantasy occurs, and according to Gunn (2004), fantasy is “inspired by the Real as a fundamental defense mechanism of subjectivity, a screen from the horrors of ‘naked nature,’ understood as a meaningless void that we recognize most consciously in moments of trauma” (7). Lundberg (2004) questioned Gunn’s emphasis on the Imaginary register for rhetorical studies by advancing “the possibility of a Lacanian path in rhetorical studies that figures the primacy of the Symbolic as a quintessentially *rhetorical* order” (496). Lundberg (2004) argued that “figuring the Real as a failure of the Symbolic helps to avoid the inevitable temptation in psychoanalytic criticism to return to an ego psychology oriented interpretation of Freud in which the subject is produced by negotiating conflicts with a pre-given, ontologically stable reality” (497).

What Gunn and Lundberg identify as the fundamental rhetorical operations of Lacanian theory are directly related to the rhetorical concepts of *invention* (fantasy) and *order* (Symbolic). The Symbolic is that part of the psyche which is “thought” to be the most stable. This is the case of ideology where the “making sense” function appears. More specifically, when someone “makes sense” of a particular phenomenon or “comes to terms” with it, the person brings rhetorical order to the particular phenomenon by

rationalizing it. When this Symbolic order breaks down, we enter the realm of the Imaginary in terms of fantasy. The imaginary is the domain of fantasies. Daly (2004) explained that “while the symbolic is in principle open-ended, the imaginary seeks to domesticate this open-endedness through the imposition of a fantasmatic landscape that is peculiar to each individual. In other words, the imaginary arrests the symbolic around certain fundamental fantasies” (p. 6). We might also think of fantasy’s connection with the imaginary as Žižek (2002a) explained: “Fantasy fills the gap between abstract intention to do something and its actualization: it is the stuff of which debilitating hesitations—dread, imagining what might happen if I do it, what might happen if I don’t do it—are made, and the act itself dispels the mist of these hesitations which haunt us in this interspace” (p. xl). Fantasy invents meaning by filling in the abstract gaps in the Symbolic. The Real is that which is repressed, but returns to necessitate protection by the Imaginary and the Symbolic. If rhetoric is concerned with symbolic order and invention, then the repressed Real serves as the unstable foundation upon which rhetorical invention and rhetorical order are built. More simply, the repressed Real is the engine that drives rhetorical invention and rhetorical order.

Let us take an example from Žižek to illustrate this rhetorical operation. In The Plague of Fantasies, Žižek (1997) uses a part of Petrarch’s My Secret to illustrate the function of fantasy:

Let us imagine ourselves in the standard situation of male-chauvinist jealousy: all of a sudden, I learn that my partner has had sex with another man—OK, no problem, I am rational, tolerant, I accept it . . . but then, irresistibly, images start to overwhelm me, concrete images of what they were doing (why did she have to

lick him right *there*? Why did she have to spread her legs *so wide*?), and I am lost, sweating and quivering, my peace gone forever. (p. 1)

Prior to his partner's revelation, the male-chauvinist represses his sense of vulnerability and fragility in his psyche. For the fantasy to remain in-tact, the male-chauvinist must remove any doubt that he is not the best or only desired sexual partner. This is the male chauvinist fantasy—his imagined sense of self and the symbolic world seems to coincide with this fantasy. In the symbolic order of the male-chauvinist, the partner's fidelity symbolizes the fantasy's veracity. When his partner reveals that she not only desired someone else, but also acted on that desire, the symbolic order begins to crumble because the revelation violates the way he imagined himself in relation to his partner. Within the male-chauvinist's symbolic frame, this is taken as a symbol of another male being better than himself—something that touches against his fundamental fantasy. Rhetorical order has turned to rhetorical dis-order as the male chauvinist sweats and quivers, and the invention of a new imagined self destroys the peace (order) forever—that is until he imagines (invents) some other way to stabilize (order) his world (“my partner just doesn't know what good is,” “my partner doesn't know what they have lost,” “I didn't want my partner anyway”).

## **TOWARD A BURKELACANIAN RHETORICAL THEORY**

The idea of fantasy here is an easy segue into the primary focus of this dissertation—the updating and altering of Burke's theory of the Unconscious and its relation to his theory of rhetoric. While updating and altering Burke's theory using Lacanian scholarship, this dissertation will also provide a way for scholars who already

understand Burke's dramatistic theory of rhetoric to grasp some of the complexities in Lacanian scholarship. The purpose of delving into some of the core tenets of Lacanian theory here is to lay the groundwork for what is to come since such tenets will be an invaluable part of building on Burkeian theory.

Žižek's above example of the male chauvinist fantasy is laden with Burkeian drama—a studly man is betrayed by his partner, the affair wrecks havoc on him (traverses fantasy), and then there is some resolution to the conflict (order restored), the end. For Burke, conflict is the essence of drama, and conflict is a given in the realm of human affairs. This is what Dramatism is all about. If no conflict in human affairs, then dramatistic methods would be irrelevant to study human affairs. Furthermore, if conflict is the essence of drama, then that which is covered (repressed) by the (un)stable symbolic “order” and maintained by the work of imaginary “invention” is the essence of conflict. Using the previous example, the conflict between the male and his partner is the essence of the drama, and that which is repressed (his self-image as fragile and not the best sexual partner, and his partner's desire to have a sexual relationship with another man) by the (un)stable symbolic “order” (the sexual relationship viewed as stable by the male) and maintained by the work of imaginary “invention” (“my partner must think I am the best sexual partner since she obviously doesn't want to have sex with another man”) is the essence of conflict. More simply, the repressed Real is the essence of conflict. In this sense, the repressed content in the Unconscious motivates rhetorical order and rhetorical invention in particular ways. This also brings us back to the introductory Nipplegate example by forcing us to ask when something becomes more than just a thing. When

does the sexual act become more than just a sexual act? The answer is when a male-chauvinist fantasy is involved. When does a nipple become more just a nipple? The answer is when a particular type of fantasy is involved. When a thing is more than just a thing, a particular fantasy is involved, and when a fantasy is involved, so the repressed content in the Unconscious is also a factor. The next chapter will further clarify the importance of the Unconscious, as well as its nature and scope, by honing in on Burke's characteristics of the Unconscious and its Lacanian extensions/alterations.



## NOTES TO CHAPTER TWO

<sup>1</sup> “Janet Jackson” was the number one search term for the year 2004 (“Janet Jackson,” 2006) and the year 2005 (“Janet Jackson Biggest,” 2005).

<sup>2</sup> While nearly all theories of meaning may attempt to answer these questions, psychoanalytic theories explicitly address the relationship between motives and the Unconscious. This explication will be addressed in detail in chapter two of this dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> For example, see Golden, Berquist, Coleman (2000) and Foss, Foss, and Trapp (1991). A notable exception to this is Vitanza’s (1997) Negation, Subjectivity, and The History of Rhetoric.

<sup>4</sup> One might be tempted to claim that this idea posits individuals as primary and society as derived. However, the clarification that I would like to make here is that the individual and the social are “at odds” with each other and develop based on a competition between these two forces—neither of which is “primary” or “derived”—they merely “exist.”

<sup>5</sup> This “concealed” supplement to ideology may be said to function as the “repressed content” of ideology, and the “repressed content” is stored in the Unconscious.

<sup>6</sup> The term “instinct” here is drawn from the second of Smith’s (1998) three justifications for the study of rhetoric. I am drawing a parallel here between his idea of “instinct” and Freud’s concept of human nature. Freud’s concept of human nature will be

further discussed in chapter four of this dissertation. For more on his concept of human nature, see Freud (1989).

<sup>7</sup> I am not meaning to imply that “evil” is the only human instinct. Rather, one of the presumptions in this justification for studying rhetoric is that rhetoric helps to “re-solve” the “excesses of human nature.” These “excesses of human nature” are most commonly categorized as “evil,” and “rhetoric” is posited here as a way “re-solve” such “evils.”

<sup>8</sup> As previously noted, the Unconscious is both inside and outside of language. When referring to the “storing” of repressed content, I mean the Unconscious that exists outside of language, but that may return “in language” in the form of a symptom.

<sup>9</sup> The “one of the split, of the stroke, of rupture” is what gives power to ideology because such rupturing is unbearable—ideology is powerful because it offers the promise for “re-solving” the trauma of such ruptures.

<sup>10</sup> The predominant focus of this dissertation will be on the concept of an Unconscious as a useful *construct* for rhetorical scholars. However, the point to be made here is that regardless of how useful rhetorical scholars judge the construct to be, rhetorical scholars may inevitably have to face the Unconscious as neuro-science finds more and more information about the human brain.

<sup>11</sup> The tricky part of the repressed content is that we cannot be entirely sure that the traumatic material occurred in the precise manner of the “flashback,” but there are always elements in the flashback that were particularly traumatic at the time that are

consistent with the conscious experience at the traumatic moment. For instance, a soldier may remember killing another soldier on the battlefield, but the soldier's flashback may have them "re-member" killing the other soldier and then killing fifteen more soldiers. While we cannot be sure whether the killing of fifteen more soldiers is an accurate account of what happened, the actual traumatic experience of killing the first soldier is made vivid all over again through the resurfacing of the repressed traumatic material into consciousness.

<sup>12</sup> LSD research is not without controversy given studies on false memory syndrome that suggest that LSD is not reliable since it also produces hallucinatory effects through suggestion in addition to the recalling of repressed content. Still, since at least some of the repressed content is recalled, it sheds light on the existence of an Unconscious even if we cannot often make out precise details of what actually happened and what is supposed. The general idea of the repressed content may be confirmed through the consistency of stories that multiple people share based on the same previous traumatic encounter.

<sup>13</sup> The term "extrageniculate" refers to types of nuclei that mediate visual reflexes to the areas of the brain.

<sup>14</sup> Plato is referring here to the savage and beastly part of Phaedrus' mind. On an entirely separate note, while the work cannot be done here, there is work to be done by rhetorical scholars regarding the rhetorical imagination of the Unconscious (a rhetoric of how the Unconscious is imagined).

<sup>15</sup> The “terrible, wild, and lawless” are “elusive” in the sense that the Unconscious eludes consciousness. Critical in this interpretation of Plato is that a rational-consciousness implies a “legal regulation” such that a “terrible lawless” desire eludes the “legal regulation” through repression.

<sup>16</sup> For Jung, conscious and Unconscious are two opposing parts of the psyche. Jung divided the Unconscious into two “levels”—the personal and the collective. The personal Unconscious parallels Freud’s concept of the personal Unconscious. The collective Unconscious is deeper than the individual Unconscious in that it is the same amongst a collection of psyches (the shared primitive wiring of people to be drawn to the same religious, spiritual, and mythological symbols and experiences). Jung’s collective Unconscious may be thought of as the lowest common denominator amongst all humanity.

## Chapter Three

### The BurkeLacanian Unconscious

This chapter will survey the theories of the Unconscious in Burkeian and Lacanian scholarship in order to move toward the theorization of a BurkeLacanian Unconscious.<sup>1</sup> Attempting to comprehend Burke's theory of the Unconscious is a tricky proposition. Cheney, Garvin-Doxas, and Torrens (1999) highlighted the tricky balance by noting that "Burke incorporates Freudian insights about the unconscious (see especially Rhetoric of Motives); he also considers unintended consequences of actions (see especially Permanence and Change). So, Burke is careful not to rest too heavily on either an Aristotelian consideration of 'man' as the rational animal or on a Machiavellian emphasis on strategy" (p. 144). In this way, Burke mediates a delicate balance between the role of the Unconscious and the conscious as they relate to/with symbolic action. This delicate balance is persistent in Burke's writings and complicates the Freudian "influence" on him. In this vein, Quandahl (2001) wrote, "The connection between Freud and Burke presents a provocative research problem. Despite the fact that over the course of more than fifty years Burke often refers to and reflects on Freud, his texts resist an easy characterization of Freudian 'influence'" (pp. 634-635). She furthermore noted that "of the now tremendous body of secondary literature, only a smattering of the work acknowledges Burke's very evident (though often brief or even cryptic) uses of Freud" (p. 635).

One thing is relatively clear. For Burke, the Unconscious is an important "force" in the human psyche. For example, Burke (1966) wrote, "A Dramatistic terminology

(built around a definition of man as the symbol-using, symbol-misusing, symbol-making, and symbol-made animal) must steer midway between the computer on one side (when taken as a model of the mind) and the neurotic on the other” (p. 63). The nature and extent of the Unconscious as it pertains to Dramatism is less certain. Complicating Burke’s take on the Unconscious are statements such as: “[W]hile greatly admiring and subscribing to much that Freud discussed so ingeniously and imaginatively in his Psychopathology of Everyday Life, Dramatism cannot reduce symbolic action in *general* to the *specific* sense of symbolic action that Freud is dealing with in his studies of neuroses and the unconscious” (1966, pp. 63-64). Readers of Burke may differ over the specific influence of the Freudian Unconscious, but few would reject the idea that the Unconscious as a general category is an important factor in Burke’s entire corpus.

Specifically, readers will point to numerous places where Burke gives a nod to Freudian theories. For instance, Quandahl (2001) noted that “Burke read and reread Freud in a variety of ways: he took Freud’s texts seriously as a philosophy of the human, pursuing their implications as far as he could take them and noticing key elements of psychoanalytic interpretation; he saw that Freud’s method of interpretation included ideas about language that he felt were not limited to the sphere of neurosis and dream; and he transformed and incorporated those insights into his own developing philosophy of language and philosophy of human being” (p. 637). This brings about the following question: What precisely is the nature of the Unconscious as it pertains to Dramatism? More specifically, what are the points where Burke agrees with and differs from notions of the Freudian Unconscious? Situating the Unconscious in Dramatism is the goal of this

chapter. In other words, this chapter will attempt to explain the relationship between the Unconscious and the Dramatistic animal.

Even more so, this chapter will push this relationship further by employing Lacanian scholarship to explore the alterations and extensions to the Burkeian comprehension of the Unconscious. Lacanian scholarship has significantly altered our conception of the Unconscious from Freud's understanding. Likewise, Burke steered away from a full embrace of the Freudian Unconscious. Therefore, this chapter will also examine the ways Lacanian scholarship challenges Burke's Freudian influenced idea of the Unconscious. It will do so by exploring the ways the Unconscious is situated through various terms in the Burkeian lexicon, and explaining the Lacanian lexical supplements. As previously noted in chapter one, Burke (1957) argued, "Freud's terminology is a dictionary, a lexicon for charting a vastly complex and hitherto largely uncharted field. You can't refute a dictionary. The only profitable answer to a dictionary is another one" (p. 233). This chapter serves to use Lacanian scholarship to add to the corpus of terms to describe a BurkeLacanian Unconscious.

My argument is that Lacanian scholarship on the Unconscious offers a descriptive update to the "Dramatistic dictionary" that decreases the vagueness of Burke's lexicon about the Unconscious. In order to demonstrate this argument, I have divided this chapter into three sections. Section one will examine the specific mentions of Freud and the Unconscious in Burke's work in order to discern Burke's theorization of the Unconscious. Section two will present a BurkeLacanian concept of the Unconscious as part of the human psyche. Section three will survey Lacanian clarifications to a couple of

the observations that Burke made regarding the examination of the Unconscious in the psychotherapeutic technique.

## **BURKE AND THE UNCONSCIOUS**

Burke's most systematic engagement with the works of Freud appears in his essay "Mind, Body, and the Unconscious" (Burke, 1966). In it, he attempted to form a sketch of the relationship between the Unconscious and Dramatism. This section will describe these characteristics in the order that Burke chose to arrange this important chapter.

### **Action vs. motion**

Burke begins his sketch by noting the difference between action and motion. He calls this the basic Dramatistic distinction, "'Things move, people act,' the person who designs a computing device would be *acting*, whereas the device itself would be going through whatever sheer *motions* its design makes possible" (Burke, 1966, p. 64). He continued, "In brief, man differs qualitatively from other animals since they are too poor in symbolicity, just as man differs qualitatively from his machines since these man-made caricatures of man are too poor in animality" (p. 64). It is here that Burke talks about "symbolic action" in the specific Freudian sense of the term. In his discussion of symbolic action in the context of Dramatism, Burke (1966) wrote that Freud offered symptomatic action as a "synonym" for Burke's concept of "symbolic action" (p. 64). Burke (1966) provided the following example of a pedestrian to illustrate the source of similarity:

[I]f a person found it almost impossible to cross streets even where there was no apparent objective danger (as from traffic), the situation might be neurotically symbolic or symptomatic of an inability to arrive at a decision in some other



matter that was of great importance to the sufferer, but was not consciously or rationally associated with the crossing of streets. (p. 64)

In other words, the crossing of streets may be a symbol/symptom of another action that was of great importance to the person who fears crossing the street. In this sense, Burke dedicates the entire essay to his thoughts on the Unconscious, infusing Freud with his own understanding of the Unconscious.

### **The negative**

After Burke noted the connection between symbolic action (as the basic Dramatistic action/motion distinction) and the Unconscious in his essay, he turned to the connection between the “negative” and the Unconscious. For Burke, the negative allows the establishment of commands or admonitions that govern the actions of individuals. Burke (1970) referred to these commands as the “thou shalt nots,” or the “do not do that’s” (p. 278). Moral commands such as the Ten Commandments are examples of the “thou shalt nots” that encompass the negative. The ability to distinguish between right and wrong are the consequences of the negative. According to Burke (1970), without the negative implicit in language, moral action, or action based on conceptions of right and wrong behavior (such as law, moral and social rules, and rights) would not exist.

Burke (1966) explained that “Freud’s concept of ‘repression’ in the ‘Unconscious’ is on its face doubly saturated with the negative” (p. 65). He wrote the following to detail this connection:

According to the Freudian nomenclature, the “unconscious” process of “repression” involves the fact that the thou-shalt-not’s of the “superego” would negate the desires of the “id,” that portion of the “unconscious” which knows no Negation (or, more resonantly, “knows no No”). And “symbolic” or

“symptomatic” kinds of action are said to result from unconscious attempts to elude repressions imposed by the tyranny of the “superego.” Though the role of the negative in the Dramatistic concept of “symbolic action” covers a wider area than Freud’s usage, the two realms are by no means mutually exclusive. Each in its way stresses the importance of the moralistic negative. But whereas the Freudian negative is identified solely with the process of *repression* in the *Unconscious*, the Dramatistic negative must focus upon the negative as a peculiar resource of *symbol systems*. (pp. 65-66)

This distinction becomes important since it places the status of the Unconscious as but a “part” of Dramatistic theory. In Dramatistic theory, the negative is in the domain of language and has a repressive function.<sup>2</sup> Put another way, for Freud the Unconscious as the depository of repressed content is the essence of his psychoanalytic theory, whereas for Burke the “symbolic system” is the essence of Dramatistic theory of which the Freudian notion of the Unconscious is just a “part” of a larger Burkeian “unconscious” that is defined by its existence “outside” the “symbol system.”

### **The eight varieties of the Unconscious**

In order to explain the functions of this “outside” symbol systems, Burke canonized<sup>3</sup> his notion of the Unconscious by listing eight different varieties and noting the similarities and departures from the Freudian Unconscious. The first kind of Unconscious involves the “sheerly physiological processes of the body” (Burke, 1966, p. 72). This is mostly known in biological terms as the energy that works involuntary muscles in the body such as “growth, metabolism, digestion, peristaltic ‘action,’ respiration, functions of the various organs, secretions of the endocrine glands, ways in which elements in the bloodstream reinforce or check one another, and so on” (Burke, 1966, p. 67). Burke (1966) asserted that if we were specifically aware of all or some of

these processes as some neurotics are sometimes aware of some visceral processes, “we’d be in a condition that, as judged by our present norms, would be little short of horrible” (p. 67). Then Burke differentiated this type of Unconscious from the Freudian Unconscious by drawing the distinction between “types” of repression. He argued that “Maybe our transcending of all such happenings . . . is to be treated as a kind of ‘repression.’ But it seems to differ from the *moralistic* kind of repression with which Freud was concerned” (Burke, 1966, p. 67). Thus, Burke sees no “moral” question in the repression of strictly physiological processes that reside in the Unconscious.

The second variety of the Unconscious is the “universal incorporation of the past with the present” (Burke, 1966, p. 72). In this sense, the Unconscious functions as a depository of those things that continue throughout history and resurface in the temporally present. In other words, those things that happen prior to the person being a person (their prehistory) come to resurface and shape their cultural norms through discourse. Burke (1966) explained that “many aspects of expression that once might have been studied in terms of *rhetorical* resources *natural* to language at *all* stages of history are treated rather as *survivals* from eras of primitive magic, ritual, and myth” (p. 68). What Burke (1966) had in mind here was the thought that “*any* present moment is the ‘Unconscious’ repository of the past, not just as regards some possible ‘primal’ scene or ‘Oedipal’ crime, but in terms of *all* the evolutionary unfoldings that are somehow summed up in each of us, at his given moment in history” (p. 68). The example that he provides here is the relation between the members of the Supreme Court and the Constitution. Each side in a Supreme Court case has their Constitutionally asserted wish,

without explicit reference to the other wishes. According to Burke (1966), “legal conflicts arise because, in particular cases, this ‘id’-like wishing on the part of the Constitution confronts problems of *denial*. In gratifying one Constitutional wish, the courts must frustrate or ‘repress’ another” (pp. 68-69). The history of the Supreme Court that continues to resurface in the temporally present is a history of “changing choices as regards the *hierarchy* of such wishes (decisions as to which of the wishes should be given preferential rating), since for better or worse there is nothing in our egalitarian Constitution itself that establishes such a scale once and for all” (Burke, 1966, p. 69).

Burke’s (1966) third variety of the Unconscious concerns the “recallable but not explicitly recalled. Here also might be included knowledge which one has, but which does not happen to be associated with the given topic under discussion” (p. 72). This refers to all of those things that we “know,” but that remain under the realm of direct consciousness. In other words, this form of the Unconscious refers to the stuff in the filing cabinets of our brains that can be recalled upon conscious associations. Burke (1966) distinguished this from the Freudian Unconscious by providing the example of forgetting a childhood language: “if one forgot a language that one had not spoken since childhood, surely this would not be a prime example of repression in Freud’s moralistic sense. However, Freud might offer invaluable cues as to why, of a sudden, the ‘lost’ words began turning up again” (p. 69).

The fourth variety pertains the “closely related category of dissociation among ‘sub-personalities’” (Burke, 1966, p. 72). For Burke, this is the category of the Unconscious where different “roles” are stored. For instance, a person might be at the

same time a parent, a brother, an uncle, an alcoholic, a teacher, a bartender, and an athlete. When a person is an athlete thinking about hitting a baseball, they might not be consciously thinking of themselves as a parent. Burke noted that when various conflicts among more than one personality occur, this could be a source of guilt and/or denial. For example, when President Bill Clinton stated, “I did not have sexual relations with that woman” he was acting in his legal persona (arguing over definitions of “sexual relations”) and was ignoring his Presidential persona (supposedly leading by not deceiving the public). In this sense, Clinton was able to deny having sexual relations. His persona when addressing the public was radically different than a legal persona addressing a Federal Grand Jury. Burke did not seek to differentiate this variety of the Unconscious as it pertained to the Freudian Unconscious, but merely noted it as a variety of the Unconscious that exists under the purview of Dramatism.

The fifth kind of Unconscious consists of the “entelechial” kind of “futuraity.” Burke (1966) likened this to “certain kinds of observations or conclusions [that] may be *implicit* in a given terminology, quite in the sense that a grammar and syntax are implicit in a given language” (p. 72). What he had in mind here were the “implications of a symbol system, its ‘future possibilities’ in a purely *formal* sense. Surely, in this sense, the relation between Conscious and Unconscious is not to be considered as a matter of ‘repression’ in the specifically Freudian sense of the term” (Burke, 1966, pp. 69-70). It is here that Burke likens the syntax of a language that is Unconscious to the play of mathematic formulations. He argued that “one can hardly be said to have ‘repressed’ one’s understanding of the propositions that Euclid deduced from the definitions and

axioms of his geometry. Rather, we must look upon Euclid as having *developed with thoroughness* the implications of his position” (Burke, 1966, p. 70).

Burke’s (1966) sixth variety of the Unconscious refers to “the ‘Ismic’ paradox whereby any terminology that systematically calls attention to a hitherto unnoticed area of speculation by the same token creates a corresponding kind of ‘unconscious’” (p. 72). In this sense, according to Burke, this variety parallels the Marxian distinction between consciousness and false consciousness (class consciousness vs. class unconsciousness). He explained, “By Marx’s scheme, if the bourgeois conceives of all mankind in terms of the bourgeois, said bourgeois has *unconsciously* represented (or revealed) his bourgeois *consciousness*” (Burke, 1966, p. 70). He uses this example to merely illustrate that “there is a kind of ‘unconsciousness’ that is sheerly a reflection of whatever terminology one happens to be using” (Burke, 1966, p. 71). The distinction being made here between Freud’s Unconscious and Burke’s Unconscious is a matter of attention versus repression. Specifically, Burke (1966) draws this distinction by noting that “we here confront kinds of *attention* that often are not reducible to terms of *repression*” (p. 71).

The seventh variety of the Unconscious concerns the “‘intuitive’ recognition that something is as it is” (Burke, 1966, p. 72). This form of the Unconscious is discernable in “the weather eye of the weather prophet, the ability to be a ‘good judge of character,’ the mathematical physicist’s ability to ‘idealize’ a problem in a way that affords a solution, the expert player’s ability to make exactly the right adjustments needed for his play . . .” (Burke, 1966, p. 71). He applied this variety of the Unconscious to relate to “taste,” “tact,” “propriety,” or “what the Greeks called *to prepon* and the Latins *decorum*, and the

eighteenth century the *je ne sais quoi*" (Burke, 1966, p. 71). Burke (1966) noted his separation from Freud's Unconscious in this sense by noting that such "bepuzzlements here are not instances of 'repression' in the strictly Freudian sense" (p. 71).

The last category of the Unconscious was Burke's (1966) "catchall category" that he labeled "Error, Ignorance, Uncertainty" (p. 71). This category is where he relegates all of those things that are unknown and that cannot be possibly known. For instance, "One may eat a certain contaminated food through sheer ignorance, not owing to any psychological 'repression' of such knowledge. One just happens to be 'unconscious' of its true nature" (Burke, 1966, p. 71). These are simply all of those things that a person has yet to be exposed to that could not possibly be "repressed" and are thus unconscious to the person. Burke is unclear as to whether or not this last category is influenced by Freudian theory, but we will see a direct overlap between this category and Lacanian scholarship in the next section on the BurkeLacanian Unconscious.

Together, these eight varieties form the place of the Unconscious as Burke understood it. After the "end" of his essay "Mind, Body, and the Unconscious," Burke made the observation that "Unconscious is to repression as conscious is to expression (or as latent is to patent)" (p. 77). Then, in a rather telling passage on the Freudian lexicon, he wrote:

"Repression" suggests a set of terms implicit in the idea of *process*; the "Unconscious," by reason of its dialectical relation to the Conscious, provides the particular *content* (the realm of *associations*) that is to be "processed" (the *gerundive*). And the two terministic lines, in conjunction, set up the conditions for a dialectical relation between a "pleasure principle" (on the "Unconscious" side) and a "reality principle" (on the Conscious side). Also, by keeping this genesis in mind, we can more easily understand why Freud never yielded to Utopian hopes

for the ultimate elimination of repression. The repression-unconscious-preconscious-conscious relationships may be thought of as capable of modification or mitigation, the very nature of the initial equation implies, or “foretells,” that conflict is *permanently* “built into” the system. (p. 78)

This is particularly telling of the larger relationship that Burke had with Freudian psychoanalysis since this observation is homological to Burke’s own corpus. Specifically, is it not also that the Burkeian system of Dramatism has “conflict” permanently “built into” the system? How could Dramatism function without “conflict” as a necessary component? What Burke and Freud share, therefore, is the necessity of conflict as an essential characteristic of their methodological techniques. However, the major difference is that Burke focused predominantly on an analysis of the Unconscious to explore the nature and extent of repression in the larger category of “drama,” where Freud was principally concerned with the specific drama in the mind of the analysand. Having a good idea of the topography of the Burkeian Unconscious, we need to establish the basic characteristics of the Lacanian Unconscious if we are to move toward a BurkeLacanian Unconscious.

## **THE LACANIAN UNCONSCIOUS**

Lacan viewed language and the Unconscious as distinct, closed systems<sup>4</sup> that work by logics that are different from each other. In other words, the Unconscious and the conscious are two parts of the human psyche that do not come into contact with each other without rupture in the logic in both domains. That they are, nonetheless, dynamically intermingled offered Lacan a solution to Freud’s unresolved problem: How can the Unconscious think? For Lacan, the answer is via the elusive subject of an



Unconscious network of signifying representations. Lacan designated this subject by the letter “S” barred thus:  $\$$ . In other words, the conscious subject cannot speak or think of its Unconscious aspects in a unified fashion (Ragland-Sullivan, 1986). This conscious incapacity to grasp the Unconscious in its totality is due precisely to both the evasiveness of the Unconscious and the rupture to speaking and thinking when the Unconscious content comes into contact with the conscious. Lee (1990) observed that if language lies at the heart of Freud’s own theorizing, then, Lacan nevertheless believed that it is crucial for psychoanalysts to be more systematic and, indeed, more philosophical in their reflections on language than was Freud. Lacan’s (1977) own contribution in this direction begins with an unmistakably structuralist definition of the relationship between a language and its elements: “What defines any element whatever of a language [langue] as belonging to language [langage], is that, for all the users of this language [langue], this element is distinguished as such in the ensemble supposedly constituted of homologous elements” (274/63). In other words, language is the formal vessel that sorts and abstracts particular content—or as Brummett (2004) noted, the “content or information” of abstracted language “is what we get we get in the historical, situated, less or least abstracted moment; form is what we get from the more or most abstracted patterns that cut across several historical, situated moments. Homology is a formal linkage among two or more kinds of experience” (p. 39).

Lacan (1977) defined the Unconscious in essentially linguistic terms as “that part of the concrete discourse, insofar as it is transindividual, that is not at the disposal of the subject in re-establishing the continuity of his conscious discourse” (258/49).<sup>5</sup> In this

statement we find that, as far as Lacan is concerned, any understanding of the Unconscious is fundamentally an understanding of language, and this means that psychoanalysis is itself a particular way of coming to know a language (that of the analysand) and is thus one of the sciences of the Symbolic. Therefore, Lacan's description of the Unconscious promises to be a valuable site for examining Burke's concept of the Unconscious in Language as Symbolic Action. But how exactly can Lacanian scholarship inform Burke's conception of the Unconscious?

### **THE BURKELACANIAN UNCONSCIOUS**

Having documented the Freudian influence on Burke's concept of the Unconscious, as well as the features of the Lacanian Unconscious, we may now describe the nature and scope of the BurkeLacanian Unconscious by using Lacanian scholarship to analyze each of the eight characteristics (outlined in the first section of this chapter) of Burke's idea of the Unconscious. Before doing this however, we should begin where Burke did with the distinction between action and motion, and then examine the role of the negative in the Unconscious.

#### **Action vs. motion**

First, how is it that Lacanian scholarship can inform the distinction between action and motion in Burkeian theory? Revisiting the distinction Burke made between action and motion, we find a stark comparison between the human that acts and the computer that moves—that the computer fails in its animality. For Lacan, the reason for this is that the computer does not have an Unconscious and it does not share a realm of fantasy (there might be an exception with current advances in artificial life and mega-

computers, but these types of advancements were not considered by Burke to constitute a computer in the same way as computer technology functioned in 1966 when Language as Symbolic Action was written). The computer, as Burke conceived it, is a purely Symbolic space in the Lacanian sense. The computer is programmed with characters that come together to form certain images. These are all programmed by the human and will only function within the totality of the computer's programming. In this sense, the computer merely moves within the circuits that it is programmed with. While things are stored in files, the stored materials function in a more preconscious sense, since they can be explicitly recalled with ease.

The computer not only fails in its animality<sup>6</sup> by not having an Unconscious, it also fails in its animality because it does not have an Imaginary.<sup>7</sup> Specifically, the computer does not have a fantasy that is hooked on the Symbolic network.<sup>8</sup> Fantasy may be defined as that which “fills the gap between the abstract intention to do something and its actualization: it is the stuff of which debilitating hesitations—dread imagining what might happen if I do it, what might happen if I don't do it—are made, and the act itself dispels the mist of these hesitations which haunt us in this interspace” (Žižek, 2002a, p. xl). The computer, as Burke conceived of it, does not fill a gap between abstract intention and its actualization because no such gap exists for the computer. The computer merely carries out the act that it has been programmed to carry out. It does not dread imagining what might happen if it responds to your hitting the “enter” key.<sup>9</sup> It merely carries out the command “enter” as the word “enter” is designed to function within its Symbolic network. Therefore, for Lacan, the computer fails in its animality because it does not

have a Real or Imaginary register. The three registers (Real, Imaginary, Symbolic) together are necessary to give the ability for humans to act and computers to move. More simply, if Lacan designates the Imaginary and the Symbolic as weak fortresses built to prevent encountering the Real, then we might note that: *In Burke's sense, the Real acts, the Symbolic and Imaginary move.* In other words, if no Real, then there is only motion and the human will fail in its animality. Therefore, studying the language of drama includes the ability to contextualize Symbolic language in relation to the Imaginary and Real in the psyche.

### **The negative**

The negative is another important concept that Burke addresses in relation to the Unconscious. The negative in Burke's terminology involves the moral laws—the thou-shalt-nots—that are implicit in language. The negative in the repressive sense is necessary because a symbol system has the character of totality: there is meaning only if everything has meaning. Žižek (2002a) provided the analysis of a dream as an example of this process:

In the analysis of a dream, for example, one cannot simply distinguish among its elements those that can be interpreted as signifiers from those which result from purely physiological processes: if dreams are “structured like a language,” then *all* their ingredients are to be treated as elements of a signifying network; even when the physiological causal link seems obvious (as in the caricatural case of a subject who dreams of a tap leaking when he feels a need to urinate) one must “put it in parentheses” and confine oneself to the signifying range of the dream's ingredients. What Freud called “primordial repression” is precisely this radical rupture by means of which a symbolic system fractures its inclusion in the chain of material causality: if some signifier were not missing, we would not have a signifying structure but a positive network of causes and effects. (pp. 215-216)

The inevitability of the symbolic fragility necessitates the existence of the negative as a precursor to attempting to give the symbolic its totality. In this way, the negative that Burke mentions in relation to the Unconscious is an always already “weak” negative. That is, for Lacan, repression and the return of the repressed are two sides of the same coin. Žižek (3003a) explained that the repressed content “constitutes itself retroactively, by means of its failed/distorted return in symptoms, in these ‘unaccounted for’ excesses: there is no Unconscious outside its returns” (p. 95). The negative is thus “weak” because the negative’s repressed content is known by its returns (as in the case of haunting).

Moreover, both Burkeian Dramatism and Lacanian psychoanalysis share the notion of a moralistic negative as being established against a radical nothingness (or “Void” of subjectivity). For example, Žižek (2002a) explained that “Not only do both religion and atheism insist on the Void, on the fact that our reality is not ultimate and closed—the experience of this Void is the original *materialist* experience, and religion, unable to endure it, *fills it in* with religious content” (p. xxix). The Void is the original materialist experience because there is no soul or “other world” for the materialist—we live, breath, eat, sweat, shit, fuck, die, decompose—we were originally without material form, then we attained material form, and we will lose our material form. There is nothing “more” to life than “mere” biological organisms. In the Lacanian sense, death-drive is what clears the space of the Void. Žižek (2002a) noted that “in order for (symbolic) creation to take place, the death-drive has to accomplish its work of, precisely, emptying the place, and thus making it ready for creation” (p. xxx). It is death-drive that thus creates what Burke (1984a) described in the famous passage:

We in cities rightly grow shrewd at appraising man-made institutions—but beyond these tiny concentration points of rhetoric and traffic, there lies the eternally unsolvable Enigma, the preposterous fact that both existence and nothingness are equally unthinkable. And in this staggering disproportion between man and no-man, there is no place for purely human boasts of grandeur, or for forgetting that men build their cultures by huddling together, nervously loquacious, at the edge of the abyss. (p. 272)

If it is the negative that people build their cultures around, then the “abyss” and the “Void” may be identical terms where both are cleared/made possible by the death-drive. In this sense, the moralistic negative is made possible in both the Burkeian and Lacanian systems by affirming a culture of “thou-shalt-nots” in response to the nervousness that confronting such an abyssal existence brings forth. Therefore, the moralistic negative is both “weak” and a product of the Lacanian death-drive. To study language as it pertains to the moralistic negative is thus to place it in the context of the Void/abyss as the original materialist experience. This is also a way to study the connection between language and culture that is built around the abyss.

### **The BurkeLacanian eight varieties of the Unconscious**

Having touched on the distinction between action and motion, as well as the negative, we may turn to an application of Lacanian scholarship to Burke’s eight varieties of the Unconscious that he advanced in his essay “Mind, Body, and the Unconscious” (Burke, 1966). The first variety for Burke entails those physiological processes of the body that are not directly in consciousness. In Lacanian terms, the linkage between the conscious and Unconscious parts of the psyche occur in those moments when things go terribly wrong. In Lacanian terms, consciousness occurs with an experience of the Real, of an impossible limit. What is at issue here is the conception of an “original awareness”

that “is impelled by a certain experience of failure and mortality—a kind of snag in the biological weave. And all the metaphysical dimensions concerning humanity, philosophical self-reflection, progress and so on emerge ultimately because of this basic traumatic fissure” (Žižek, 2004a, p. 59). We see this in the case of many heart attack survivors. Although some people prior to their heart attacks acknowledge that they probably do not have a healthy diet and exercise plan to delay a heart attack until much later in life, many of these same people do not see a heart attack as imminent. That is, they see it as something that will happen “someday in the future.” However, all of a sudden, they experience a heart attack—the heart fails to function properly or in the expected way. This failure makes them conscious at a very personal level the extent of their health problems. As a result, this newfound consciousness often results in people changing their diets and exercising more frequently after their first heart attack. So the experience of the Real directly informs the way the physiological process becomes conscious and relates with the Unconscious. While Burke identifies the physiological processes that reside in the Unconscious, he did not attempt to theorize how such repressed content comes into consciousness. More specifically, in terms of the physiological process he did not attempt to theorize the way the Unconscious physiological aspects “become” conscious (if they do at all in the Burkeian landscape). It is through the Lacanian “experience of the Real,” that Lacanian scholarship ties the conscious and Unconscious parts of the psyche together when it comes to the physiological processes of the body.

The second variety of the Unconscious concerns the universal incorporation of the past with the present. As previously noted, the example that Burke provides here is the relation between the members of the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Constitution. What this parallels is the fundamental Lacanian thesis concerning the relation between the signifier and the signified: “instead of the linear, immanent, necessary progression according to which meaning unfolds itself from some initial kernel, we have a radically contingent process of retroactive production of meaning” (Žižek, 2002b, p. 102). In the Constitutional example we might find the original signifiers that are re-presented in the Constitutional document. However, these are merely the empty signifiers—they are not “attached” to any “future” signifieds. When the U.S. Supreme Court is faced with a “contingent” case, they participate in a Lacanian structure whereby “the past exists as it is included, as it enters (into) the synchronous net of the signifier—that is, as it is symbolized in the texture of the historical memory—and that is why we are all the time ‘rewriting history,’ retroactively giving the elements their symbolic weight by including them in new textures—it is this elaboration which decides retroactively what they ‘will have been’” (Žižek, 2002b, p. 56). For Lacan, this process always already occurs due to the presence of a certain gap inherent to any Symbolic “structure.” This “gap” is inherent to the Lacanian lexicon. Žižek (2002a) explained:

[I]t is precisely because the chain of linear causality is always broken, because language as synchronous order is caught in a vicious circle, that it attempts to restore the “missing link” by retroactively reorganizing its past, by *reconstituting* its origins backwards. In other words, the very fact of incessant “rewriting of the past” attests to the presence of a certain gap, to the efficacy of a certain traumatic, foreign kernel that the system is trying to reintegrate “after the fact.” If the passage from “genesis” into “structure” were to be continuous, there would be no



inversion of the direction of causality: it is the “missing link” which opens the space for reordering the past. (p. 203)

The “gap” is thus the fundamental precursor to the “universal incorporation of the past with the present” because it “re-Constitutes” the Constitution that is always-already missing in links. Thus, we get the abundance of cases that continue to prove the initial “gap” in the Constitution. The Supreme Court is necessary because the law (Symbolic order) is always lacking.<sup>10</sup> In this way, Burke identifies the universal incorporation of the past with the present as a variety of the Unconscious, but does not theorize the relationship between a necessary “gap” in the symbolic as the precursor to the universal incorporation. Nor does Burke have a theory concerning the role of the signifier as connected to the Unconscious that sets the incorporation into motion.

The third variety of the Unconscious that Burke identified was the recallable but not explicitly recalled. The example that Burke provided for this variety is foreign language loss (as when a child learns a foreign language, and then “forgets” it). Aside from the fact that there could be numerous reasons for forgetting a language (i.e., neurological disorders), Burke acknowledges situations where Freud might identify why certain words begin “turning up again” in consciousness. Lacan usually referred to the idea of signifier as articulated speech, whether in conscious or Unconscious discourse. There is a Symbolic structure that is organized in a linguistic sense, and there is also the Unconscious that is also “structured like a language.” Ragland-Sullivan (1986) explained that “speech traces do accompany the earliest images [for a child]; theses *percepta* and their effects operate an unconscious network of fantasy relations prior to coherent speech.

Once a child can name things, these fantasies serve as a reference bank of memories” (p. 164). This reference bank may be “structured like a language” and are recallable but not explicitly recalled. Take for example the recurring dream of a child that has “forgotten” a language. The child may dream that they were speaking in Spanish. They<sup>11</sup> might even remember “knowing” what they were saying in Spanish while in the dream. However, once outside the dream space, the child may have no recollection of the “actual content” of the Spanish (they may not even recall a Spanish word). In this sense, the child is “able to recall” speaking a different language, but not able to “explicitly recall” what they said in the dream. For Lacan, symbols were not icons, but differential (opposed) elements “without meaning in themselves; they acquire value in their mutual relations” (Ragland Sullivan, 1986, p. 168). When he argued that “the Unconscious is structured like a language,” he portrayed the Unconscious as a meaning system that was closed, complete within itself, as is the system of language.<sup>12</sup> Thus, while Burke identified this third variety of the Unconscious as pertaining to the recallable but not explicitly recalled, he failed to identify the structure of this “recallable” information. Moreover, if fantasies serve as “a reference bank of memories,” then Lacan is able to articulate the barrier that exists between the recallable (in the Unconscious) and the ability to explicitly recall (in the Conscious).

Burke’s fourth variety of the Unconscious concerns the existence of “subpersonalities.” Yet, Burke never attempted to identify what he meant by the term “personality” that would precede the usage of the term “subpersonalities.” Lacan defined the term “personality” to be the characteristic of the human being that is influenced by

three things: “biographical development, meaning the way subjects reacted to their own experience; self-concept, meaning the way they brought images of themselves in their consciousness, and tension of social relations, meaning their impressions of how they affected other people” (Roudinesco, 1997, p. 45). If we were to take the proposition of “subpersonalities” offered by Burke, whereby the subject has multiple instances of these three components that conflict with one another, we might find that the realm of the Unconscious is the realm where personalities “hide,” only to come out in contingent experiences. Specifically, if the human “personality” is the entire make-up of the person’s biographical development, self-concept, and tension of social relations, then the “subpersonalities” that Burke refers to are constituted by “fragments” of each of the three personality components that appear when confronted with a contingent circumstance. For instance, a parent that disciplines their child may do so by recalling fragments of different experiences that they had where they were disciplined (i.e., a fragment from their parents, a fragment from their school teachers, a fragment from “that one time”) and pitting those fragments against how they see themselves and how they affected other people. All of these fragments may come together to form a specific “subpersonality” to confront the contingent circumstance. Thus, whereas Burke did not explicate the way “subpersonalities” are formed to confront specific circumstance, Lacan helps us approach the variety of the Unconscious that pertains to “subpersonalities” in a more explicit manner.

The fifth Burkeian variety of the Unconscious involves the deployment of logical conclusions that are not yet realized. There are at least two explanations for this in the

Lacanian landscape: (1) sensory exposure, and (2) the “symbolic Real.” In terms of sensory exposure, the mind continues to work through the logic of senses because the sensory data can never be totalized. In other words, “our knowledge is literally a *Be-greifen* (‘seizing’) as synthetic production, the outcome of our mind’s active manipulation of the sensual data we passively receive. For this reason, our knowledge is limited to the phenomenal reality accessible to us as finite beings” (Žižek, 2002a, p. xxv). This is confirmed in the work of cognitivists who found that we literally do not live in the present time: “that there is a certain delay from the moment our sensory organs get a signal from outside to its being properly processed into what we perceive as reality, and then we project this back into the past. So that our experience of the present is basically past experience, but projected back into the past” (Žižek, 2004a, p. 55). Moreover, our consciousness can “only operate at a maximum of seven bytes per second” (Žižek, 2004a, p. 56).<sup>13</sup> Lacanian scholars use this cognitivist research to explain why the mind “deploys the logical conclusions that are not yet realized”—the information is Unconscious since the conscious mind simply cannot process it all. As such, there is always the Lacanian “barred subject” whereby the Unconscious does the thinking by which “empirical” reality is projected back into conscious life. Specifically, Lacan (2006) advanced the idea that “I (the subject) am in so far as it (the Unconscious) thinks” (§ 51). What he meant by this is that the Unconscious is literally “the ‘thing which thinks’ and as such inaccessible to the subject: in so far as I am, I am never where ‘it thinks.’ In other words, I am only in so far as something is left unthought: as soon as I encroach too deeply into this domain of the forbidden/impossible thought, my very being disintegrates” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 147).

This idea of the “permanently un-thought” is intimately tied to the idea of the “symbolic Real.” This idea is found in equations in quantum and subatomic particle physics, whereby there is always an elusive feature (excess) for the equations. The symbolic Real is the meaningless scientific formulae. In quantum physics, Richard Feynman (a “great” quantum physicist) emphasized that “you cannot understand quantum physics, you cannot translate it into your horizon of meaning; it consists of formulae that simply function” (Žižek, 2004a, p. 68). The “symbolic Real” is the “scientific Real” which is based on a meaningless, almost presubjective, knowledge. This is also the case in sub-atomic particle physics. While the scientific formula for the fastest possible speed is the formula for the speed of light,<sup>14</sup> the boundaries of such equation are beset by a “knowledge in the Real” that suspends such equations:

Subatomic particle physics...repeatedly encounters phenomena that seem to suspend the principle of local cause, i.e., phenomena that seem to imply a transport of information faster than the maximum admissible according to the theory of relativity...Let us take a two-particle system of zero spin: if one of the particles in such a system has a spin UP, the other particle has a spin DOWN. Now suppose that we separate two particles in some way that does not affect their spin: one particle goes off in one direction and the other in the opposite direction. After we separate them, we send one of the particles through a magnetic field that gives it a spin UP: what happens is that the other particle acquires a spin DOWN (and vice versa, of course). Yet there is no possibility of communication or of a normal causal link between them, because the other particle had a spin DOWN immediately after we gave the first particle a spin UP, i.e., *before* the spin UP of the first particle could cause the spin DOWN of the other particle way down in the fastest way possible (by giving signal with the speed of light). The question then arises: *How did the other particle “know” that we had given the first particle a spin UP?* We must presuppose a kind of “knowledge in the real,” as if a spin somehow “knows” what happens in another place and acts accordingly. Contemporary particle physics is beset by the problem of creating experimental conditions to test this hypothesis (the famous Alain-Aspect experiment from the early 1980s confirmed it!) and of articulating an explanation for this paradox. (Žižek, 1992, pp. 45-46).

Because such equations based on the theory of relativity are always-already a limitation for terms to represent the totality of a “logic,” but that in material reality works itself out (what could be faster than light in the theory of relativity?). There is always the “impossible limit” of a symbolic enterprise that sustains the drive for the symbolic to continue functioning. The “symbolic Real” is thus a necessary component to the conscious Symbolic by sustaining its driving force—which is a linkage that Burke failed to make between the variety of the Unconscious that “deploys the logical conclusions not yet realized” and its influence on conscious “symbolic action.”

The sixth variety of the Unconscious for Burke is that a given terminology has an unnoticed area of speculation. Burke used the Marxist term “false consciousness” in order to explain the unnoticed area of speculation. As such, he defined this variety in an ideological way since “false consciousness” is intrinsic to Marx’s definition of ideology whereby “they do not know it but they are doing it” (also the definition of false consciousness). The point Lacanian scholars like Žižek (2002b) make in relation to this Burkeian variety of the Unconscious is that having an “unnoticed area of speculation” is the *only way* that a terminology can sustain itself since it is only by this “unnoticed area of speculation” that there is a part of logic that escapes the subject—it is the only way that the subject can “enjoy his symptom” (p. 21). In other words, if the “unnoticed area of speculation” were to be noticed, then the given terminology would dissolve itself. If false consciousness were to turn into “true” consciousness (i.e., by knowing “too much”), then the social reality of capitalism would not be possible according to Marxist ideological

thought. The measure of the success of interpreting capitalist social relations is that capitalist social relations would cease to exist because “true consciousness” would be attained. Žižek (2002b) thus reads ideology to function a bit differently in relation to the knowledge of a given terminology to explain social relations:

[I]deology is not simply a “false consciousness,” an illusory representation of reality, it is rather this reality itself which is already to be conceived as “ideological”—“ideological” is a social reality whose very existence implies the non-knowledge of its participants as to its essence—that is, the social effectivity, the very reproduction of which implies that the individuals “do not know what they are doing.” “Ideological” is not the “false consciousness” of a (social) being but this being itself in so far as it is supported by “false consciousness.” Thus we have finally reached the dimension of the symptom, because one of its possible definitions would also be “a formation whose very consistency implies a certain non-knowledge on the part of the subject”: the subject can “enjoy his symptom” only in so far as its logic escapes him—the measure of the success of its interpretation is precisely its dissolution. (p. 21).

So rather than the Burkeian description of a given terminology as *having* an “unnoticed area of speculation,” we have the more radical Lacanian reading that this “unnoticed area of speculation” is the *very basis* for the existence of the terminology.

Burke’s seventh variety of the Unconscious was the category of “intuition” that includes those elements of “to prepon,” “decorum,” and the “je ne sais quoi.” This category of the “intuition” is a magical entity for Burke. However, for Lacan it is precisely bound up in the paradox of desire. Specifically, this “je ne sais quoi” is the Lacanian “object petit a” or the “object cause of desire.” For example, Žižek (1997) specifically used the terms “object petit a,” “unfathomable X,” and “je ne sais quoi” interchangeably to explain the same concept (p. 23). The Lacanian object petit a is posited by desire itself. According to Žižek (1992), the paradox of desire is “that it posits

retroactively its own cause, i.e., the object *a* is an object that can be perceived only by a gaze ‘distorted’ by desire, an object that *does not exist* for an ‘objective’ gaze” (p. 12). Žižek (1992) described this in other words by noting, “the object *a* is always, by definition, perceived in a distorted way, because outside this distortion, ‘in itself,’ *it does not exist*, since it is *nothing but* the embodiment, the materialization of this very distortion, of this surplus of confusion and perturbation introduced by desire into so-called ‘objective reality’” (p. 12). More simply, the *objet petit a* is objectively nothing although it assumes the shape of something. Another feature of the objects petit a is that they are always elsewhere (in a permanent state of displacement) and are thus always objects of excess. A melancholic is “somebody who has the object of desire but who has lost the desire itself. That is to say, you lose that which makes you desire the desired object” (Žižek, 2004a, p. 113). Moreover, the object petit a is directly implicated in the concept of fantasy since fantasy is that which “designates the subject’s impossible relation to *a*” (Žižek, 1992, p. 6). With all that surrounds the term “je ne sais quoi” as “object petit a,” Lacan created a distinct lexicon for talking about “intuition” in a more descriptive fashion than a simple magical variety of the Unconscious.

The eighth variety of the Unconscious is Burke’s “catch-all” category of “error, ignorance, and uncertainty.” Burke says with accuracy that this category is not a function of repression in the Freudian terminology. While differentiating this category from “repression,” he still maintained that “error, ignorance, and uncertainty” is a variety of the Unconscious. However, there is little here to suggest what “all” this category might be “catching” that are not encompassed in the previous seven categories. For instance,



Burke used the example of a person being “Unconscious” of a type of poisonous food. But this example seems to beg the question of the first variety of the Unconscious referring to the Unconscious “physiological processes of the body” since it is only through the contact with the food and the “failure” of a physiological process that one becomes conscious that they were previously unconscious of the poisonous food. In other words, the bio-chemical responses of the body to food digestion are conscious of what makes the body work as expected, even though such process may not be in the cognitive processing of the person. When a poison is introduced into the body, the body knows that it has just encountered something that did not fit within its “normal” processing of food. In this way, there is something embedded “in the body” that is not conscious “to the body” which is the Unconscious knowledge of the poison (so it reacts by sending its immune system and other defenses to the “poison”).

The other example Burke alluded to for this variety is that of a voter who cannot have adequate knowledge for how a candidate will react to a situation with which the person has yet to be confronted. This category thus might refer to the inability to tell the future—that since we are unaware of what will happen in the future, we must be unconscious of it. With the exception of the classical philosophical problem of free will versus determinism, we might find that, instead of this being a variety of the unconscious, it is something that is altogether “non-conscious.” That is, the events of the contingent future irrespective of the sensory subject, are simply not a question of consciousness or Unconsciousness unless and until they are “sensed” in the Unconscious or conscious. Because this category is a “catch all category” with no articulation of what it might be

catching, the category is not useful for the study of language aside from having the function as a place-holder for future developments that might develop about the Unconscious that are not related to the previous seven.

### **BURKE'S POST-SCRIPT ON THE UNCONSCIOUS**

“Mind, Body, and the Unconscious,” as it appears in Language as Symbolic Action, is part of a paper that was cut considerably to meet the restrictions of a fifty minute lecture. The omitted material from the paper was added in the “Comments” section immediately following the essay. So, having analyzed the main essay, I need to examine some of the further reflections that Burke made. This section, therefore, will analyze Burke’s omitted comments on the Unconscious using Lacanian scholarship to further articulate the BurkeLacanian Unconscious.

In the omitted materials, Burke (1966) reminded the reader that “Freud is so thoroughly Dramatistic” (p. 75). Still, Burke included the originally omitted notes as a critical warning against the analyst’s role in analyzing the Unconscious. He wrote that: “Since it is often the case that a sick soul needs to have implicit faith in the analyst, perhaps a concern, no matter how appreciative, with the terministic deployments of the Freudian nomenclature as such threatens to impair the effectiveness of the analyst’s role, with regard to his patient (or customer)” (Burke, 1966, p. 76). For our purposes of delving into Burke’s concept of the Unconscious, there are two critical points of concern in his commentary. First, there is the issue of purpose and responsibility when the category of the Unconscious enters into discussion. Second, there is the concern that the

apparent freedom of the method deflects from the very authoritarianism at its heart. I will address each in turn.

### **Purpose, the Unconscious, and responsibility**

Since the idea of purpose is implicit in the idea of an act for Burke, “repression” takes on “teleological possibilities” (Burke, 1966, p. 76). Burke (1966) explained that “If A hurts B unintentionally, the incident is not an act in the full sense of the term, but an accident. . . . once the element of the ‘unconscious’ is introduced, a terministic situation is then set up whereby we might look for a kind of ‘accident’ that is ‘unconsciously’ an act, in ‘unconsciously’ possessing a kind of purpose” (p. 76). This “unconscious” purpose is that which fails to be expressed. Thus, Burke (1966) advanced the proposition that “Unconscious is to *repression* as conscious is to *expression* (or as latent is to patent)” (p. 77).<sup>15</sup> In other words, Burke’s notion of the Unconscious in this respect concerns all the mental content that exists but that is not “pressed” out of the body (ex-pressed/patent). Specifically, Burke’s idea here is that if A hurts B, and the expressed/conscious reaction is to call it an accident, then the category of the Unconscious beckons forth the possibility that the conscious “accident” was no accident at all. In other words, the category of the Unconscious brings forth the possibility that there are no “accidents” and that responsibility for “hurting B” is also always already possible.

This radically re-orientes the conception of “purpose” in Burke’s lexicon because an Unconscious purpose introduces the possibility that a “purpose” is not always rationally/conscious. In other words, a “purpose” cannot be separated between an “official purpose” on the side of the conscious, and a “sub-official purpose” that is on the

side of the Unconscious. For example, we can look to a common sibling quarrel. When a little boy pushes his little sister, the little boy does not necessarily rationally/consciously intend to make her fall over and hurt her head. When the little boy apologizes to his sister for hurting her head, a parent jumps in and quickly tells him, “Sorry only counts if it was an accident!” The boy is confused because he thinks he did not rationally/consciously think he would hurt his sister’s head, so he makes a plea to his parent, “but I did not mean to hurt her!” The parent responds by stating, “Don’t lie. I saw you push her!” The question of purpose is thus a murky situation in the “expressed” form. That is, the evidence available is that the boy pushed his sister. But why did he push her? What was his “purpose”? He expressed a conscious “official purpose” where he proclaims that he did not intend to hurt his sister. Complicating the “official purpose” statement is that the parent suspects intention on the part of the brother. Is it possible that the boy unconsciously intended to harm his sister? Perhaps there were a series of such behavior that led the parent to suspect that the boy intended to harm her. Introducing the category of the Unconscious thus makes purposeful acts always already possible. In this example, it would always already be possible that the boy’s “sub-official purpose” (Unconsciously) was to hurt his sister—that it was no accident. The distinction between the “official purpose” and the “sub-official purpose” is rooted in the Lacanian idea of the “obscene unwritten” that supplements any symbolic order.

We might further articulate the “obscene unwritten” and its relation to purpose and responsibility through the idea of the “obscene unwritten” as “collateral damage” in the “official purpose” of war. Taking a more political example into consideration, we

might examine the relationship between the role of the Unconscious, purpose, and responsibility in the use of “collateral damage” as a euphemism for mass murder. The United States Air Force Targeting Guide (1998) defined “collateral damage” as “unintentional damage or incidental damage affecting facilities, equipment or personnel, occurring as a result of military actions directed against targeted enemy forces or facilities. Such damage can occur to friendly, neutral, and even enemy forces” (section A7.1). So, when the U.S. drops bombs in many cities around the world it can shrug off responsibility for killing people by claiming them as “unintended targets” or “collateral damage.”

This is not far removed from what has happened in the case of the U.S. war on terrorism. Defense Secretary Rumsfeld (2001) scapegoated responsibility for casualties by stating that “responsibility for every single casualty in this war, whether they're innocent Afghans or innocent Americans, rests at the feet of the al Qaeda and the Taliban” (17<sup>th</sup> ¶). General Franks (2003) attempted to elude responsibility by framing the innocent in terms of “victims” (that he intends to rescue), not “enemies” (that he intends to kill): “When you begin to do that weapon/target pairing, then you'll begin to look at all of the places where we know we do not want to strike because we're Americans, because we're part of a coalition that treats citizenry like that in Iraq as victims, not as enemies, as the president has said.” Many people believe the idea that the Bush administration did not intend to kill civilians. For instance, a statement by the Friends Committee on National Legislation (2001) stated, “While we know that the administration’s intent is not to harm innocent civilians with its bombing, Afghan civilians have already suffered this

unintended effect. Weapons inevitably malfunction, are misdirected, or put civilians adjacent to the intended targets in harms way” (5<sup>th</sup> ¶).

So what happens when we introduce the concepts of the Unconscious, purpose, and responsibility? What is “repressed” from the conscious decision for the U.S. to go to war is that such decision brings forth the intention of killing civilians. The fact that the Department of Defense has a euphemism for the murder of civilians indicates that they are unwilling to acknowledge (ex-press) that they intended to kill them. If civilians are killed in every modern war, and you make the decision to go to war, then it is fair to say that you intend to kill civilians by going to war. How is it that the Department of Defense can on the one hand know that going to war will kill civilians (the rhetoric of trying to “minimize” not “eliminate” civilian casualties), and on the other hand consciously express that they did not “intend” to kill civilians as in the case of the rhetoric of “collateral damage”? The answer is that they repress their intention in their Unconscious. They cannot bear the trauma that they actively and knowingly kill the civilians. In other words, in their calculative rhetoric, they focus more on the ends by repressing the means. However, responsibility lies in both the ends AND the means. If you are responsible for the ends, you are responsible for the means and vice-versa. They are inseparable. And whereas the ends are most often the “purpose,” and the means are achieved through the “act,” responsibility must apply to both the “act” and the “purpose.”

This Burkeian reading of the Unconscious is informed by Lacan’s concepts of the “university discourse” and “production.” Lacan’s theory of “university discourse” and “production” extends Burke’s relationship between the Unconscious, purpose, and

responsibility by introducing power as a related variable. The “university discourse” is enunciated from the position of “neutral” knowledge. Žižek (2003) explained that “the ‘truth’ of the university discourse, hidden beneath the bar, of course, is power, i.e. the Master-Signifier: the constitutive lie of the university discourse is that it disavows its performative dimension, presenting what effectively amounts to a political decision based on power as a simple insight into the factual state of things.” “Production” does not stand simply for the result of the discursive operation as in Foucault’s concept of “discipline” as it relates to knowledge-power. Rather, it stands for the “indivisible remainder,” for the excess which resists being included in the Symbolic. Žižek (2003) provided the example of the doctor-patient relationship: “at the surface level, we are dealing with pure objective knowledge which desubjectivizes the subject-patient, reducing him to an object of research, of diagnosis and treatment; however, beneath it, one can easily discern a worried hystericized subject, obsessed with anxiety, addressing the doctor as his Master and asking for reassurance from him.”

Cannot the same be said about the press conferences of the Department of Defense? As previously noted, that which resists being included in the Symbolic is that the decision to go to war comes with the intent of killing civilians. We can thus see how the “university discourse” and “production” introduce power into Burke’s equation: we are dealing with “objective” knowledge of the war that comes from the Department of Defense which desubjectivizes the subject-citizen by reducing the subject-citizen to an object of research (as in the Department of Defense finds that the public is ailing for security). So, they diagnose the subject-citizen with a “fear of terrorism” and treat it by

reassuring them that the subject-citizen is cared for in all cases (no civilian casualties intended) through the elimination of the cause of their dis-ease (terrorists). And, beneath all of this we see the subject-citizen hystericized, obsessed with anxiety, addressing the Department of Defense and asking reassurance from it. The “truth” of the repressed content of the Master is the reduction of people to bare life as the essential kernel that sustains biopolitical power. That is, only a Master that reduces the subject to an object of diagnosis and treatment can claim that “external” effects are “collateral damage” (like the doctor who has “unintended complications” in surgery or “side effects” of drugs). And, reducing the subject to the status of object is the fundamental feature of biopolitical power (the administered life).

### **Authoritarianism**

Burke’s (1966) second mention of the Unconscious in the post-script makes an argument about authoritarianism regarding the way Freudian psychotherapy analyzes the Unconscious of patients. Specifically, he wrote “Though the Freudian terminology, viewed as a ‘philosophy of life,’ does lay major stress upon emancipating the patient, this very feature of *Freedom* deflects attention from the notably *Authoritarian* aspects of psychotherapy, in the patient’s subjection (however roundabout) to the analyst’s role of priest of the confessional couch” (pp. 79-80). He continued by noting that “the element of authority is doubly concealed by the fact that the overtly libertarian style of the terminology contrasts so greatly with the authoritarian element explicitly indicated in Fascist, Communist, and theological doctrine (a kind of unconscious deception found also in much contemporary science, that continually appeals to the testimony of the



‘authorities’ in a given field)” (p. 80). Here, Burke’s idea of authoritarianism may be further advanced by Lacanian scholarship on the exercise of authority.

For instance, Žižek (2002a) introduced three elementary structures of the exercise of authority as they pertain to psychoanalysis: traditional authority, manipulative authority, and totalitarian authority. Traditional authority is based on what Žižek (2002a) calls the “mystique of the Institution” (p. 249). This type of power is rooted in the charismatic power of “symbolic ritual, on the form of the Institution as such” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 249). This type of authority is seen in the king, the president, the judge, and so on, who can all be dishonest and rotten but “when they adopt the insignia of Authority, they experience a kind of mystic transubstantiation; the judge no longer speaks as a person, it is Law itself which speaks through him” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 249). The Lacanian “plus-One” accounts for this type authority: “every signifying set contains an element which is ‘empty,’ whose value is accepted on trust, yet which precisely as such guarantees the ‘full’ validity of all other elements. Strictly speaking it comes in excess, yet the moment we take it away, the very consistency of the other elements disintegrates” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 250). In other words, according to Lacan, when the charisma fades along with the symbolic ritual, the transubstantiation is lost and traditional authority rapidly fades.

Žižek (2002a) called the second elementary structure of authority “manipulative authority” (p. 251). Manipulative authority is that authority which is “no longer based on the mystique of the Institution—on the performative power of symbolic ritual—but directly on the manipulation of its subjects” (p. 251). This is the kind of authority that

relates to the “late-bourgeois society of ‘pathological Narcissism,’ constituted of individuals who take part in the social game externally, without ‘internal identification,’—they ‘wear (social) masks,’ ‘play (their) roles,’ ‘not taking them seriously’: the basic aim of the ‘social game’ is to deceive the other, to exploit his naivety and credulity” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 251). The fundamental attitude of manipulative authority is cynical in the strictest Lacanian sense—the cynic only believes in the Real of enjoyment. In manipulative authority, the cynic preserves “an external distance towards the symbolic fiction; he does not really accept its symbolic efficacy, he merely uses it as a means of manipulation” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 251). The symbolic fiction takes its revenge on manipulative authority when the fiction and reality coincide and the manipulators perform as “their own suckers” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 251).

The third elementary structure of authority is “totalitarian authority.” This involves the Lacanian concept of the fetish. Totalitarian authority occurs when people acknowledge themselves as those who—although knowing very well that they are people like others—at the same time consider themselves to be “‘people of a special mould, made of special stuff’—as individuals who participate in the fetish of the Object-Party, direct embodiment of the Will of History” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 252). This type of authority thus occurs when people maintain a certain truth in the face of a fiction—when despite knowing that their reasons are just because, they assert them all the more in the face of this non-reason. In other words, totalitarian authority does not necessarily believe in the Real of enjoyment, but the very maintenance of the symbolic Law itself even though the law is a symbolic fiction.

The point in introducing the three forms of authoritarianism is to demonstrate that Lacanian scholarship enables a better reading of the Burkeian Unconscious than Burke originally proposed because Lacanian scholarship differentiates between the various types of authoritarianism as they pertain to both the conscious and Unconscious parts of the psyche. When we return to Burke's (1966) statement that, "*Freedom* deflects attention from the notably *Authoritarian* aspects of psychotherapy, in the patient's subjection (however roundabout) to the analyst's role of priest of the confessional couch" (pp. 79-80), we find that the two forms of authoritarianism (the priest and the psychotherapist) are notably complex. The complication arises because different priests may rely on different forms of authority. The forms of authority applicable here are traditional and manipulative.

The traditional priest is the one who, although a sinner (rotten) possesses charisma through the symbolic ritual and undergoes a mystic transubstantiation (dishonest) in order to speak the word of Law itself. Traditional authority is reliant on the symbolic rituals and proprieties since it is the ritual and propriety that defines "priestness." For example, a priest who deploys traditional authority uses their position of power within the space of the confessional to enact the Law. To do so requires the priest to deny their fallibility, not because in all spaces and at all times the priest believes in their sinless nature. Instead, traditional authority is employed for the sake of the sinner confessing with the goal of gaining adherence to the symbolic Law of the church. However, without the cloak of the tradition that makes possible the transubstantiation

(the symbolic ritual itself), the priest is revealed as rotten and dishonest—not worthy of re-presenting the church.

Manipulative authority is used for the sake of the non-transubstantiated priest, or the priest in sheep's clothing. An example of manipulative authority is when a person desires sexual satisfaction from young boys and becomes a priest to achieve his desire. In this case, the "priestness" attained through ritual and tradition becomes the "social mask" to attain jouissance from little boys. When fiction (their status as "priest") coincides with reality (their sexual escapades made public), their "mask" is removed and they are their own suckers. Even though the symbolic ritual may continue, their authority within that ritual is gone (which, if allowed to continue participation in the ritual, may destroy the ritual itself).

The same two types of authority may also apply to the psychotherapist, however Burke's claim of the psychotherapist as priest of the confessional couch does not take into account the complexities that may occur as a result of the repressed content underneath the masks of both traditional and manipulative authority. And, of course, it is that which is underneath the "masks" that is the domain of the repressed content stored in the category of the Unconscious. Thus, Lacanian theory helps to clarify Burke's observation by detailing the very conditions whereby *Freedom* deflects from the *Authoritarianism* of Freudian psychotherapy.

## **SUMMARY**

In sum, we have surveyed the landscape of the Burkeian concept of the Unconscious. We first examined the Dramatistic action/motion distinction and the

negative. In analyzing Burke's distinction between action and motion, we clarified the distinction with the Lacanian psychic registers by noting that the Real acts, and the Imaginary and Symbolic move. We also found that the Lacanian "death drive" clears the space (creates the abyss/Void) which is the necessary precondition for the culture of "thou-shalt-nots" to be advanced in the form of the moralistic negative. We then analyzed the eight Burkeian varieties of the Unconscious and explicated the following BurkeLacanian varieties: (1) The Unconscious of bodily processes that return from the repressed when something goes terribly wrong, (2) The Unconscious that constitutes the "gap" as the precursor to the universal incorporation of the past with the present whereby the signifier sets the incorporation in motion, (3) The Unconscious that is a closed meaning system, complete within itself (as is the system of language) whereby parts of the meaning system are recallable but not explicitly recalled, (4) The Unconscious as the hiding place for "subpersonalities" that only come out when confronted with contingent experiences that exceed Imaginary and Symbolic appropriation, (5) The Unconscious that thinks outside of consciousness in order to deploy the logical conclusions that are not yet realized, (6) The Unconscious that stores unnoticed areas of speculation that are the very basis for a given terminology (the "leap of faith" for belief to exist), (7) The Unconscious that includes the category of "intuition" that results from the *objet petit a* being permanently displaced/excessive to the Symbolic order, and (8) The Unconscious that is altogether ignorant of future contingent encounters. Finally, we examined Burke's commentary on the Unconscious, purpose, and responsibility as well as his idea of authoritarianism as it relates to psychotherapeutic methodology. We found that the

category of the Unconscious makes it always already possible that there is no such thing as an accident and the implications for responsibility. Using Lacanian theory we were also able to clarify the different formal structures of authority as they may be used in psychotherapeutic method.

In the next chapter, we will examine the role of the Unconscious in the private and public subject of conflict in Dramatism. Specifically, Burke conceived of two subjects in the dramatistic method: the subject simultaneously takes on public and private characteristics—public in the sense of being involved in larger social conflicts, and private in the sense of internal conflicts that happen within the person’s psyche. In this sense, there is a dynamic split between public and private drama inherent to Dramatism. How does Burke account for this public/private split inherent to the human subject? This beckons forth a larger question: How does Burke theorize the human psyche in Dramatistic methodology? That is, what might the human subject look like in order to remain consistent with the Dramatistic method? A good Burkeian scholar might acknowledge that Burke used the Freudian Oedipal subject to articulate the private subject of conflict and the Marxist political subject to account for the public subject of conflict. But what accounts for the splitting of Marx and Freud into separate domains? Chapter four will examine the Lacanian interpretation of the Oedipal conflict in the formation of the subject that mediates between Marx and Freud in Burke’s theory of Dramatism. As such, we will come to identify a “barred subject” at the heart of public and private drama that is the subject of the Dramatistic method itself. More simply, we will tease out the sense of conflict inherent to both Dramatistic and Lacanian theory. The

tension is necessary to navigate if we are to assess the ability of a BurkeLacanian theory to make important contributions to the way rhetorical scholars analyze fragmented texts.

### NOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

<sup>1</sup> In doing so, this chapter will also survey Freud's influence on the theories of the Unconscious of Burke and Lacan.

<sup>2</sup> While the Burkeian term "the negative" is not in Freud or Lacan's theory of the Unconscious, the concept of the negative may be found in the way both Freud and Lacan psychoanalyze the symptom(s) of the Unconscious in language.

<sup>3</sup> By "canonized," I mean that Burke created his official declaration of the nature and scope of the Unconscious. We might even call this his "eight canons of the Unconscious."

<sup>4</sup> By "closed systems" I mean to suggest that there are two very different systems operating by two very different logics that, when they come together, wreck havoc on each other. For example, imagine two engines that spin gears in the same direction (i.e., both gears spin clockwise). If the gears from the two engines come into contact with each other, they grind each other since gears must turn in the opposite direction of each other if they are to smoothly function together. The two engines may be a metaphor for the two closed systems from each other. When the Unconscious and conscious parts of the psyche come together, they grind each other. The Unconscious comes into contact quite often in human life.

<sup>5</sup> This may seem contradictory to the beginning of the previous paragraph where the conscious and Unconscious are two closed systems. However, an important nuance is



that the Unconscious is both inside and outside language. The Unconscious is inside language in the form of the symptom, and outside of language in the form of the content that is repressed by the signifier.

<sup>6</sup> I focus on “animality” here because the Unconscious is not uniquely human, and because Burke uses the term in his discussion of action vs. motion.

<sup>7</sup> I am not making a claim here about all animals having an Unconscious and an Imaginary. However, humans are not the only animals to have an Unconscious and Imaginary. For example, the academy award nominated documentary film The Story of the Weeping Camel documents the potential existence of an Unconscious and Imaginary in camels. These traits may also exist in other animals including orangutans, bonobos, and dogs.

<sup>8</sup> We know this based on the instance where the computer fails in the symbolic order. For instance, world chess champion Garry Kasparov battled “Deep Blue” a PC based chess computer. The computer ultimately failed as the game went on because it has no ability to imagine when placed in the situation of unpredictability. According to Peterson (2007), “there are about  $10^{120}$  possible 40-move games. To give you a sense of how enormous this number is: It dwarfs even the most generous estimates of the number of atoms in the universe. If each atom were replaced by a supercomputer, it would still be impossible to complete all the evaluations in preparation for a perfect game’s first move. The most unexpected things happen in the middle of a game, after a largely predictable sequence of opening moves and before the endgame when only a few

pieces rule the chessboard and paths are relatively clear. It is in this muddled middle ground, with its explosion of possibilities, that humans excel and computers can lose their way.”

<sup>9</sup> Dread is one of the key symptoms of an imaginary.

<sup>10</sup> We might also note here the extension into Lyotard’s theory of the differend. Two competing interpretations over signifiers in the constitution are just that—two competing interpretations. The violence occurs when the stabilization of a signifier is litigated. See Lyotard, J. (1988). The Differend: Phrases in Dispute. G.V.D. Abbeele, trans. (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P).

<sup>11</sup> I am using “they” here as a plural singular pronoun. This might seem a bit clumsy, but is a way of speaking about an abstract person in non-gendered terms.

<sup>12</sup> Meaning systems of language are not necessarily closed in a finite way. Each language system may expand infinitely as floating signifiers expand in their meaning. The point here is that the conscious and the Unconscious each have meaning systems that are closed off from each other. They are complete only insofar as they are momentarily stable and unruptured, or rather, left undisturbed by contact with each other.

<sup>13</sup> Žižek is referring here to the speed of the brain’s information processing. The point here is that the conscious mind processes things much slower than the Unconscious. The conscious mind is biologically limited in its processing capabilities. For instance, Dr. Pawel Lewicki (2007), a cognitive researcher, noted that “The mechanism of preconscious processing (the preconscious processor) is equipped to efficiently process

complex information and appears to be incomparably more able to process complex knowledge faster and ‘smarter’ overall than our ability to think and identify meanings of stimuli consciously” (p. 1)

<sup>14</sup> The speed of light is exactly 299,792,458 meters per second. This is determined by James Clerk Maxwell’s equations for electromagnetism. Specifically, the speed of light is determined by the value of “c” as equal to the permittivity of free space that is represented in the following formula:  $c = 1/\sqrt{\epsilon_0\mu_0}$ .

<sup>15</sup> The opposite of expressed is impressed, but here Burke is concerned with the relation between expression and repression.

## **Chapter Four**

### **An Introduction to the BurkeLacanian Subject**

Having explored the importance of the Unconscious to the study of rhetoric and the BurkeLacanian Unconscious, this chapter seeks to outline the fundamental characteristics of a BurkeLacanian subject. The BurkeLacanian subject is rooted in the tension between Marxist and Freudian thought. This does not mean that the BurkeLacanian subject is properly Freudian or Marxist. Rather, it is heavily influenced by the Burkeian mediation of these two theorists. The influence of Marx on the BurkeLacanian subject is rooted in Marx's influence on both Burke and Lacanian scholarship. Such influence is not without a certain degree of tension.

The tension over Marx's influence on Burke and Lacanian scholarship is rooted in a history of the tension between Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxist economics. One of the earliest systematic critiques of Freud came from Valentin Vološinov. Inspired by Marxist economics, he argued in 1927 that the Freudian Oedipus complex was "a purely ideological formulation projected into the psyche of a child. The Oedipus complex is not at all the unadulterated expression of objective physiological facts" (Vološinov, 1976, p. 82). In his view, such "ideological formulation" supplies us with very little in the comprehension of human motivation. As a result, he argued that motives stemmed from conflicts over the material world, and that "only with the help of the flexible methods of dialectical materialism have we the possibility of illuminating those conflicts" (Vološinov, 1976, p. 83). The Marxist critique of Freud thus began as a defense of

dialectical materialism against the positing of an “ideological” Oedipus complex to explain human motive.

The centrality of the debate was over the “nature” of human being. In seemingly direct opposition to Marxist ideals of communal values, Freud posited that “aggressiveness” lies at the heart of human nature as a force that seeks to “naturally” destroy community. To explain this idea more fully, I can do no better than to quote Freud (1989) at length:

The communists believe that they have found the path to deliverance from our evils. . . . [However], aggressiveness was not created by property. . . . If we do away with personal rights over material wealth, there still remains prerogative in the field of sexual relationships, which is bound to become the source of the strongest dislike and the most violent hostility among men who in other respects are on an equal footing. If we were to remove this factor, too, by allowing complete freedom of sexual life and thus abolishing the family, the germ-cell of civilization, we cannot, it is true, easily foresee what new paths the development of civilization could take; but one thing we can expect, and that is that this indestructible feature of human nature will follow it there. (pp. 71-72).

This brings to the forefront one of Aune’s (1994) ideas about the rhetorical problems of Marxism. Namely, that Marxists “must explain why audiences should accept its prescriptions, given the inevitability argument” (p. 13).<sup>1</sup> Freud thus used the method of psychoanalysis to create a rhetorical problem for the method of dialectical materialism. Because Freud believed that social problems were the result of personal aggressive tendencies, he sought to cure patients in the personalized space of the therapy session.

This move to the psychoanalytic clinic has drawn much attention from critical scholars. For instance, in 1949 in a collective statement of self-criticism, eight French Communist Party psychiatrists wrote “Psychoanalysis, a Reactionary Ideology” (“La

Psychoanalyse,” 1949). They criticized the American psychoanalysts as “managing” peaceful relationships between workers and employers (Turkle, 1992, p. 89). The clinical promise to make people happy with their current relation to capitalism brought forth another rhetorical problem. According to Aune (1994), the communist rhetorical problem is that, “Only communism will free the worker from the slavery of wage labor. But it must first persuade the worker that he or she is unhappy” (p. 27). From the Marxist perspective, Freudian psychotherapy works to make the worker less unhappy with their relationship to bourgeois control over the modes of production. In this vein, Cloud (1998) argued that Freudian psychotherapy “subverts the potential opposition to the social order by blaming sufferers for their own sociopolitical victimization (predominantly, in our society, under capitalism and in systems of racial and gender oppression) and by encouraging people to adjust to life as it is rather than to attempt to change the structure of society” (10).

If Hegel taught us anything, it is that when two seemingly divergent views are advanced, there will be an attempted synthesis to ease the dialectical relationship. We see this attempted synthesis with the numerous scholars that have attempted to advance a Marxist psychoanalysis. For instance, Reich (1946) believed that the source of sexual repression was a bourgeois morality and the only cure was an active, guilt-free sex life that could only come through a therapy that was not imposed on a subject by a repressive economic structure. Coming out of the Frankfurt school, Marcuse (1955) argued that capitalism prevented the attainment of a non-repressive society based on “a fundamentally different experience of being, a fundamentally different relation between

man and nature, and fundamentally different existential relations” (p. 5). Althusser (1984) advanced the Marxist concept of ideological structure as consisting of an inevitably repressive (Freudian) function which the political subject must continually struggle against. Jameson (1981) argued that the Freudian “individual subject is always positioned within the social totality” of capitalist relations and that gaining consciousness of their position in class society requires “a painful ‘decentering’ of the consciousness of the individual subject” (p. 283).

Still, scholars such as Brown (1974) insist that a synthesis of the Marxian and Freudian subject is impossible since “there is a huge difference between the social control of Freud and the social revolution of Marx. Marxism sees the praxis of human beings, their active part in changing the world for themselves. People are not innately passive, nor do they function as a mass of unbridled instincts. They are participants in history because they are history” (p. 72). In such a view, control is held in binary opposition to revolution. The reduction of Marxian and Freudian theories to the binary of control/revolution is too simplistic. Burke acknowledged the complexities of both of their thinking while creating important sites of connection.

Burke believed that Marxian and Freudian theories should be able to work together. For instance, Burke (1957) wrote that “both Freudians and Marxists are wrong in so far as they cannot put their theories together, by an over-all theory of drama itself (as they should be able to do, since Freud gives us the material of the closet drama, and Marx the material of the problem play, the one treated in terms of personal conflicts, the other in terms of public conflicts)” (p. 291). In other words, for Marx the substance that

people share in language is the domain of the public subject, whereas for Freud the substance that divides the subject from the public is the domain of private conflicts. But in what sense do these conflicts overlap? What is the “substance” that Burke speaks of? More specifically, what are the conditions by which the constitutive features of the human subject are able to exist in the public and private domains? In other words, if humans are symbol-using and mis-using creatures, what does it mean to be subject to the Marxist “problem play” that occurs in public where humans are used creatures (as in Marx’s concept of “alienation”)?

In this chapter, I will address Burke’s concept of the human subject in order to address such questions. In order to get an idea about the features of the dynamic dramatistic human creature in Burkeian theory, we need to interrogate what exactly Burke means by his definition of human being. Doing so will allow us to contextualize the Unconscious as analyzed in the last chapter within a BurkeLacanian theory of the psyche. The purpose of this chapter is twofold. One purpose is to advance the basic tenets of a BurkeLacanian subject. The other purpose is to explore the Marxist influence on a BurkeLacanian theory.<sup>2</sup> My argument is that using the resources offered by Lacanian scholarship to analyze the influence of Freud and Marx on Burke’s theory of Dramatism helps to clarify a BurkeLacanian subject that introduces a more critical vocabulary to approach questions of desire and enjoyment as political and rhetorical factors in rhetorical theory and criticism. In order to demonstrate the clarification, I have divided this chapter into three sections. Section one analyzes Burke’s definition of the human creature and subsequent scholarship that attempts to clarify his definition. Section two



explains the Lacanian concept of subjectivity. Finally, section three addresses the numerous clarifications that the Lacanian subject makes to Burke's theory of the human subject. In the end, we shall get a better idea of what constitutes a BurkeLacanian subject.

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BURKEIAN SUBJECT<sup>3</sup>**

In his essay "definition of man," Burke (1966) defined the human with five characteristics. The human is: (1) "the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal," (2) "inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)," (3) "separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making," (4) "goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order)," and (5) "rotten with perfection" (p. 16). In beginning to analyze these constitutive features, we might return to Burke's (1966) basic Dramatistic distinction between action and motion: "Things move, people act" (p. 64). For Burke, the five fundamental features of the human fall under the idea of human action.

However, as far as the BurkeLacanian subject is concerned, the human is divided in their "own" action. For the BurkeLacanian subject, the five Burkeian features do not all fit within the strict category of action. Rather, the first and third characteristics fall under the category where "people act." Namely, the person "acts" by *making*, *using*, and *mis-using* symbols and by *creating* instruments. The "use and misuse" of symbols is correlative of the Lacanian Symbolic by moving within a logology. The "making" of symbols and the "creation" of instruments are correlative of the Lacanian Imaginary whereby the BurkeLacanian subject invents new ways of "quilting" a logology. The last two Burkeian characteristics fall under the BurkeLacanian category where "things

move.” Namely, the “spirit” of hierarchy moves people to order, and “perfection” moves people to rot as if perfection were a type of bacteria. These characteristics are correlative of the Lacanian concept of fantasy since “hierarchy” and “perfection” rest on the subject’s distance from the *objet petit a*. Burke’s second characteristic is a little trickier since it falls under both categories. Specifically, the human either acts by *inventing* the negative or the human is moved by “the negative” by being moralized by it. This feature alludes to the core of the BurkeLacanian subject as the dialectic of desire and enjoyment, and the dialectic between the Real on the one hand and the Symbolic and Imaginary on the other.

So the human is both subject and object—subject to the “spirit of hierarchy,” “perfection,” and “the negative” while objecting through “making, using, and mis-using symbols,” “making instruments,” and “inventing the negative.” In this sense, the human is a complex creature—both acting and acted upon. It is no wonder, then, that Burke attempted to bridge Marxian and Freudian thought since Marx was concerned with acting through the formation of resistance (i.e., the problem play<sup>4</sup>) and Freud was concerned with the way the human was moved by external forces (i.e., the closet drama).

This idea parallels Biesecker’s (1997) observation that Burke’s concept of the human being is a dialectical one. In reading the distinction between action and motion as only a differential relation between human and nonhuman “critics theoretically elide what is, perhaps, one of the most productive moments in Burke’s work: the tacit suggestion that the difference that obtains *between* the human and nonhuman, and that indeed structures their relation, also obtains *within* the human being itself” (Biesecker, 1997, p.

27). She continued, “As Burke put it on more than one occasion, human actions are ‘more than motion’; they are ‘a merger of active and passive’ and, thus, register the variable play of these two irreducible motivational loci that reside in the human being” (p. 27). This idea prompts her to conclude that, for Burke, the human being is first and foremost a dialectical animal: “*dialectic* is a term I believe signifies for Burke the *process* of the production of the human being, a *movement* that effects verbal or symbolic action but is not limited to these particular determinations. . . . Motive proper, then, is that which lies somewhere between action and motion, mind and body” (pp. 29-30). The term Burke used to identify the movement between action and motion, and mind and body is *transformation*.

Bertelsen (1993) described transformation as “Burke’s conception of reality” that is a process “established through a perpetual dialectic between biological phenomena and the social context” (p. 232). As such, from a transformational perspective, “being is dependent on knowing insofar as knowing is dependent on being. Both come together in Burke’s view, as the action that results from the transformation of sensory perception through symbolism” (Bertelsen, 1993, p. 235). Burke (1984a) suggested that the transformation of subjective perceptions into objective perception (movement between private and public subject<sup>5</sup>) “brings us close to the ‘pathetic fallacy’ in its purity: the tendency to find our own moods in the things outside us. And the equivalent for this, in the intellectual plane, would be the tendency to find our own patterns of thought in the *texture of events* outside us” (p. 214). In this way, transformation is “the process Burke relies on to explain the ineffable movement between subjective perception and social

context, from biological to symbolic and vice-versa: the redefinition or recontextualization of individuated perception in a socially recognizable form, or the influence of that form on human perception” (Bertelsen, 1993, p. 235). Moreover, Burkeian transformation is precisely the conception of reality that “suggests a foundation for rhetoric that embraces a dialectic between ontological and epistemological dimensions—between the way things are and the way we understand them to be” (Bertelsen, 1993, p. 235).

The dialectic between the ontological and epistemological dimensions is constitutive of human rhetoric (human symbol-making, symbol-using, symbol mis-using). Burke did not clarify this dialectical relationship until later in his work. In 1965, Burke explained: “In my early book in 1935, *Permanence and Change*, I used rhetoric and ontological as synonymous terms. Later, I had to modify this equation; I made the shift in my 1968 article ‘Dramatism’” (Brock et al., 1985, p. 22). Burke (1985) explained his shift: “Though my aim is to be secular and empirical, ‘Dramatism’ and ‘logology’ are analogous respectively to the traditional distinction (in theology and metaphysics) between ontology and epistemology” (p. 89). Chesebro (1988) argued that since 1968, Burke’s philosophy has functioned dialectically with ontological and epistemic dimensions operating simultaneously. In studying Burke’s work from 1931 to 1990, Brock (1993) concluded that “as scholars begin to rely on Burke’s logology and Dramatism in their efforts to expand our knowledge of human symbol using, it is essential for them to understand his epistemological and ontological systems” (p. 328).

The Dramatistic domain is the domain whereby we can understand Burke's first characteristic of the human being: "the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal" (Burke, 1966, p. 16). Burke (1985) wrote that Dramatism "features what we humans *are* (the symbol-using animal). Logology is rooted in the range and quality of *knowledge* that we acquire when our bodies (physiological organisms in the realm of non-symbolic motion) come to profit by their peculiar aptitude for learning the arbitrary" (pp. 89-90). This brings us back to the dialectical relation between action and motion whereby the human animal uses, makes, and misuses symbols based on the very movement between subjective (biological—i.e., Freud) perception and social (symbolic—i.e., Marx) context. Thus, the first characteristic of the human can be characterized as ontologically Dramatistic (with its dialectical relation to/with Logology), functioning in dialectical tension between the features of the problem play (Marx) and the closet drama (Freud).

What are we to make of the second characteristic of the human being as "inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)" (Burke, 1966, p. 16)? It almost appears that Burke could not make up his mind when it came to the negative. Is the human being "either" the inventor of the negative "or" moralized by the negative? Is the human being the inventor of the negative "and/or" moralized by the negative? Both of "either/or" and the "and/or" understandings might be viable interpretations of the Burkeian negative. To get a better idea of Burke's interpretation of this characteristic of the human animal as it pertains to the description of the BurkeLacanian subject, we should look to Burke's exploration in the third section of "Definition of Man" (Burke, 1966).

Burke (1966) begins this section by noting his discomfort with the term “inventor” as it pertains to the negative: “I am not wholly happy with the word, ‘inventor.’ For we could not properly say that man ‘invented’ the negative unless we can also say that man is the ‘inventor’ of language itself” (p. 9). He then speculates that “So far as sheerly empirical development is concerned, it might be more accurate to say that language and the negative ‘invented’ man” (p. 9). What this shows is that Burke is undecided when it comes to this question. More specifically, it is a “chicken and egg” thing—which came first the human or the language (language as embedded in the negative)? However, this question is ultimately irrelevant to Burke (1966) since he stated, “In any case, we are here concerned with the fact that there are no negatives in nature, and that this ingenious addition to the universe is solely a product of human symbol systems” (p. 9). While writing about magic and mystery in Burke’s scholarship, Blakenship (1989) wrote that “While nature’s story existed before we were born and may well exist after we are gone, human story came into being with the first creative verbal fiat” (p. 135). Blakenship’s (1989) reading of Burke is suggestive in that he points out the “fiated” nature of language. Namely, that language is merely a given (without definitive origin) and, thus, that the only important observation is that the negative is a given that disciplines the subject. Since Burke was uncomfortable with claiming that the human was the “inventor” of language, it is tough to say that Burke believed that the human created the negative. “Invention” may thus be said to be a metaphor as a form of “creation” (by whom is uncertain). Thus, it was “verbal fiat” that invented the negative. Once invented, the negative became a moralizing agent.

The third clause of Burke's (1966) definition of the human being involves being, "Separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making" (p. 13). This clause refers to the movement from "nature" to "second nature." Burke (1966) explained with the following example:

I recall once when there was a breakdown of the lighting equipment in New York City. As the newspapers the next day told of the event, one got almost a sense of mystical terror from the description of the darkened streets. Yet but fifty miles away, that same evening, we had been walking on an unlit road by our house in the country, in a darkness wholly "natural." In the "second nature" of the city, something so natural as dark roadways at night was weirdly "unnatural." (p. 13)

The movement from a dark New York City to a lit New York City created a "customary" environment whereby New York City became expected to be lit. The lit New York City had become natural (had become "second nature") through the tools humans created to light the city. The light thus acted as more than just light. It became a symbol of what a "natural" environment was. In this case, part of the definition (the nature) of "New York City" included being "a city that is lit at night." Thus, when New York City was no longer lit, the "mystical terror" set in.

Perhaps this idea can be further expressed by examining Burke's idea that symbols stand between humans and their natural environment. Fisher and Brockriede (1984) labeled Burke a "linguistic realistic" and argued that his philosophy is ontological while having implications for epistemology. Heath (1986) argued that Fisher and Brockriede's blending of ontology and epistemology "comes from the principle most essential to Burke's theory: a clutter of symbols into which we are born shapes our thoughts by standing between us and our environment" (p. 122). This Cartesian split

between “us” and “our environment” implicates the private and social realms. As Burke (1966) wrote, “the toolmaking propensities envisioned in our third clause result in the complex network of material operations and properties, public or private, that arise through men’s ways of livelihood, with the different *classes* of society that arise through the division of labor and the varying relationships to the property structure” (p. 15). If we take from our previous accounts of Burke’s description of the public as the domain of Marx and the private as the domain of Freud, then we might conclude that this third characteristic pertains to the way symbols alienate people from both the “natural” (read Freud) world and the “material” structures (read Marx). In sum, we get the third characteristic to imply a fiated structure whereby the symbolic structure acts to separate humans from their environment (by creating public and private domains).

Burke’s fourth characteristic of the human is that they are “goaded by the spirit of hierarchy” (p. 15). Burke (1966) gives us a less “weighted” option if we do not want to go so far as to say that there is a “spirit” of hierarchy. Instead, he wrote that we could settle for the proposition that humans are “moved by a sense of order.” Worth noting is that, for Burke, the “sense of order” here is concerned with action where the agent is the “sense of order.” If we take Burke’s sense of the negative seriously, then we might even advance the proposition that “dis-order” is central to “dis(sens)ion.” That is, in the Burkeian Dramatistic landscape, to dissent is to disorder. This is not all that far removed from Freudian and Marxian influence on Burke since Marx sought dissent against capitalist order and Freud sought therapeutic technique to re-solve disorder.



One of Burke's primary examples regarding the relationship between the symbolic and hierarchy involved the use of the law. The law is bound up in the negative with demands written as "thou shalt nots." He wrote that, "Here man's skill with symbols combines with his negativity and with the tendencies towards different modes of livelihood implicit in the inventions that make for divisions of labor, the result being definitions and differentiations and allocations of property protected by the negativities of the law" (Burke, 1966, p. 15). On this hand, it appears that hierarchy applies to the Marxist critique of the legal system that was established to protect property rights. On another hand, hierarchy might be seen as a private drama as that which is found in Dante's Divine Comedy. Burke (1966) described Dante's Divine Comedy as the piece whereby "the principles of such hierarchical order are worked out with imaginative and intellectual fullness" (p.16). In this sense, hierarchy functions at the most personal level—not by maintaining property relations but by implicating the individual soul. Finally, in an altogether different sense, we might find that one can interpret Burke as reserving a way to be "moved by a sense of order" without being hierarchical. For instance, in analyzing Burke's work on music, Asenas (2005) argued that "order within a musical system is not tainted by the possible negative consequences of hierarchy, and thus, offers a means to understand order apart from domination and hierarchy" (p. 2). Taken together, Burke's human: (1) is moved by a sense of order that structures a hierarchical relationship (i.e., those that choose to go through Freudian psychotherapy and the law that protects property), (2) dissents with other orders (i.e., those that seek revolution against capitalist order and those that are "abnormals" in the

psychotherapeutic clinic), and (3) is moved by non-hierarchical order (as they “feel” music in a non-hierarchical scheme).

The last characteristic of Burke’s human is that they are “rotten with perfection.” Freud directly influenced Burke in advancing this feature of the human. Specifically, Burke (1966) quoted Freud’s Beyond the Pleasure Principle where Freud calls upon us “to abandon our belief that in man there dwells an impulse towards perfection, which has brought him to his present heights of intellectual prowess and sublimation” (p. 17). Burke (1966) then cites Freud a few sentences later that he finds mutually contradictory with the previous passage: “The repressive instinct never ceases to strive after its complete satisfaction” (p.17). Burke’s (1966) point in making sense out of the seeming contradiction is to posit the existence of a “drive to make one’s life ‘perfect,’ despite the fact that such efforts at perfection might cause the unconscious striver great suffering” (p. 18). This parallel between perfection and drive relies on the classical conception of entelechy which refers, he claims, to the state of fulfillment or fruition. Since nobody ever attains the “perfect,” the human is forced to rot. In other words, “perfection” is the drug that the human gets addicted to. Once a “perfection” addict, the person is driven to do whatever it takes to attain the “perfect” even if it causes the “unconscious striver” great suffering. The critical difference between perfection and drive is that perfection is always an ideal that is never actually attained, whereas the satisfaction of a drive may be radically destructive.

To recap thus far, we have noted that Burke’s human being is both the public and private subject that is directly reflexive of Freudian and Marxist thinking. Burke’s human

has five characteristics: (1) “the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal,” (2) “inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative),” (3) “separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making,” (4) “goaded by the spirit of hierarchy (or moved by the sense of order),” and (5) “rotten with perfection.” These characteristics suggest that the human creature is dynamically caught in the middle of public and private conflicts—both being acted upon by “natural” conditions in the form of those things that “move” the human (the negative, language, hierarchy, and perfection), and “acting” on “natural conditions” through the symbolic. Thus, the dialectic between motion (i.e., the negative, language, hierarchy, perfection) and action (symbolic) form two irreducible motivational loci in Burke’s thought. This very dialectic is at the heart of Burke’s idea of the dialectical relationship between the public and private subject of conflict. However, while this discussion is of importance for this dissertation, it still sidesteps the more important point. Namely, we are left wondering: What happens when we introduce the category of the Unconscious to the public and private subject? And, how does Lacan inform the Freudian and Marxist influence on Burke’s human being? Before we can attempt to address this question, we must first examine the Lacanian subject. Doing so will allow us to compare and contrast the Burkeian and Lacanian subjects in order that we may “come to terms” with a BurkeLacanian rhetorical subject.

### **THE LACANIAN BARRED SUBJECT**

The Lacanian (1981) subject is fundamentally different than the preceding Humanist or Cartesian foundational, rational, unified, self-certain human subject.<sup>6</sup> Instead

of positing a self-certain subject who is more or less in control of its own actions, Lacan insists that there is a “barred” subject that is constituted by an irreparable or irreducible split between the ego and the unconscious. Fink (1995) explained that “[t]he subject is nothing but this very split. Lacan’s variously termed ‘split subject,’ ‘divided subject,’ or ‘barred subject’—all written with the same symbol, \$—consists entirely in the fact that a speaking being’s two ‘parts’ or avatars share not common ground: they are radically separated” (p. 53). Within the make-up of the divided subject, consciousness is displaced by an unconscious, which is understood as “another scene” about which consciousness or the ego can have no knowledge, and within which it cannot intervene or exert any control (Biesecker, 1998).

This does not mean that the Lacanian subject is *entirely* different from the rational unified subject of Humanism or Cartesianism. To the contrary, both share the initial infinite possibilities before they are, in Heidegger’s (1971) terminology “thrown” into Being. That is, for Lacan, there is no subject that exists prior to its entrance into language, speech, or the symbolic since it is precisely this movement which marks the advent of the necessarily self-alienated “I.”<sup>7</sup> Biesecker (1998) explained that “Given that any human being becomes a subject only by adopting or incorporating a language or symbolic order which is not its own but which constitutes its ‘I,’ any value or power it ‘has’ comes to it from the outside, from the system of language or the symbolic order. In and of itself, the subject is nothing, radically empty, powerless” (p. 223).

Lacan’s subject begins with the pre-oedipal subject, or the “pre-symbolic” subject. The pre-symbolic subject assumes an ontological position as a precondition to

the symbolic world. This ontological position demonstrates clearly why symbols (in the Burkeian sense) cannot alone capture what it is to be a human subject. Lacan (1977) wrote:

Symbols in fact envelop the life of man in a network so total that they join together, before he comes into the world, those who are going to engender him “by flesh and blood”; so total that they bring to his birth, along with the gifts of the stars, if not with the gifts of the fairies, the shape of his destiny; so total that they give the words that will make him faithful and renegade, the law of the acts that will follow him right to the very place where he *is* not yet and even beyond his death; and so total that through them his end finds its meaning in the last judgment, where the Word absolves his being or condemns it—unless he attains the subjective bringing to realization of being-for-death. (p. 68).

What Lacan described here is the always already in-scribed subject prior to the formation of an “I” within the symbolic network. The subject is thus primordial nothingness. Lacan (qtd. in Fink, 1995) stated that “the subject fails to come forth as someone, as a particular being; in the most radical sense, he or she is not, he or she has no being. The subject *exists*—insofar as the word has wrought him or her from nothingness, and he or she can be spoken of, talked about, and discoursed upon” (p. 52). Nancy and Lacoue-Labarthe (1992) asserted that the single most important move Lacan made and to which all his insights may ultimately be attributed, is to have pushed the theory of the subject through a theory of language which literalizes it. As such, the Oedipus complex occurs as a struggle over/between the pre-“I”, images, and the symbolic that negates the pre-“I” (the symbolic network that attempts to totalize the infant). This is not the same interpretation of Freud’s Oedipus complex where the struggle occurs over/between the mother, father, and son. The Lacanian interpretation of the Oedipus complex requires further breakdown

if we are to know the alterations and modifications to the Freudian influence on Burkeian theory.

Lacan maintained that we are prematurely born since most animals emerge from the womb with considerable functionality, able to feed, to walk, and to be independent to some degree. Humans emerge helpless, completely dependent on those around them—as if, for months after birth, they are still in the womb. The child begins with no language and no images and so there is no knowledge of concepts or distinctions. The sense of self in the child is synonymous with and completely identified with “world.” Most adults are not like the child in that they have a fairly clear sense of the distinction between “I” and the rest of the world. The world is imagined to begin at the outside of our skin and goes on forever—containing millions upon millions of separate things that are none of them “I.” For the young infant, the world is full of only one thing. There is no boundary at the skin—self and the millions of separate things are one. However, there are phenomena that continue to contradict this lack of boundary: the child becomes aware of pleasure and unpleasure, of pain and hunger from the food not being there. Thus, the infant is on its way to being aware of a distinction between self and world. Lacan summarizes this process in a metaphoric event called the mirror stage.

If you show a baby about six months old (who isn’t blind<sup>8</sup>) a mirror, the baby will usually do two things, both of them strange. No other animal does either of these things. First, the baby will recognize that the image presented is an image of itself. The baby will not, like a cat does, think there is another animal there. Second, the baby will laugh<sup>9</sup> to indicate pleasure in this revelation, this realization of self. The metaphorical take on this

for Lacan, is that an actual mirror may not exist in the realization of a concept of self (as in, for instance, the case of the blind). The important part for Lacan is that the mirror stage marks the beginning of an imagined self which is different than the world. This mark is part of building a silo of images for making sense of the world. This is also known as the register of the Imaginary for Lacan. And, Lacan located the desire of the mother as the desire for the dreamy unreliable landscape of the imaginary. This metaphorical interpretation of the mother is a far cry from Freud's literal sexual desire by the child for the mother.

As in Freud, the desire for the mother (the dreamy unreliable landscape of the imaginary) is disrupted by the father. And, as in Freud there is castration. However, with Lacan the desire for the mother is interrupted by the name of the father which marks the entry into the symbolic register—the child enters language. This is precisely how Lacan translates the Freudian Oedipus complex metaphorically: Lacan imagined that language (father) cuts off the child from dreamy bliss (mother).<sup>10</sup> It is language that names the world into existence; that creates all the categories by which we separate the world into manageable chunks. When we enter the organized, articulated world of language, the dreamy world of the mother is suppressed. So, for Lacan, there are three layers to the Oedipus complex: at the bottom deeply and unutterably repressed is desire for the Real, on top of that is the Imaginary as the desire of the mother, and on top of that suppressing it is language as the Symbolic.

That which cannot be incorporated into the symbolic order to constitute one's "I" is the repressed content that is the Lacanian Real. As previously noted in chapter three,

Lacan identified the Real in relation to two other basic dimensions—the Symbolic and the Imaginary—and together the triadic structure constitutes the human psyche. For Lacan, what we call “reality” is articulated through signification (the Symbolic) and the characteristic patterning of images (Imaginary) (Daly, 2004). Strictly speaking, both the Symbolic and the Imaginary function within the order of signification. The Symbolic is the structure of signifiers that are held in place by a certain “pure signifier” that is essentially empty. The symbolic is a quilt of signifiers. The “pure signifier” is also referred to as the “quilting point,” the “Name-of-the-Father,” and the “point de capiton.” This quilting point unifies the symbolic field and constitutes identity. The point de capiton holds the place of the big Other. The big Other is the code that is behind our masks that regulates our exchanges. Lacan asked, “what if there is no big Other?” Žižek (2001a, 2003) identifies “God” as a form of the big Other. “God” is the quilting point for the religious symbolic network. It also is the symptom that covers a certain defectiveness and inconsistency of the symbolic universe (“only God knows”). Belief constitutes a faith in the existence of the big Other as a defense against the Void of subjectivity.

Daly (2004) stated that “while the symbolic is in principle open-ended, the imaginary seeks to domesticate this open-endedness through the imposition of a fantasmatic landscape that is peculiar to each individual. In other words, the imaginary arrests the symbolic around certain fundamental fantasies” (6). The Real is the reason for fantasy—fantasy is constructed as a safeguard against the Real. However, fantasy is not an absolute blockade. Fantasy has small spaces that are opened up for the Real to come



through and leave an anamorphic *stain* (or trace) that pops up all of a sudden in the midst of reality.

Any normative symbolic structure depends on an obscene (fantasy) dimension that must remain unspoken. The world of the normative symbolic structure is parallel to Hart and Burks' (1972) notion of rhetorical sensitivity that "makes effective social interaction possible" (75). Social interaction is possible only by the distance (sensitivity) from an obscene dimension. As such, the social interaction relies on the repression of this obscene dimension in order to hold it together. Žižek (2004a) explained that "the problem with the Real is that it happens and that's the trauma. The point is not that the Real is impossible, but that the impossible is Real" (70). The Real cannot be directly represented, but can be alluded to in horror-excess. The critical difference between the Real and the real is that the Real prevents the symbol from becoming itself.<sup>11</sup> When the Real traverses the fantasy of the subject, the subject is forced to go through a symbolic "re-birth." Traversing the fantasy is an example of a Lacanian "Act." Žižek (1992) explained that "the act proper is the only one which restructures the very symbolic co-ordinates of the agent's situation: it is an intervention in the course of which the agent's identity itself is radically changed" (p. 85).

The Lacanian landscape allows for an articulation of the way desire and enjoyment operate within the rhetorical tradition. Contrary to Freud who believed that desire was mostly undirected since humans are biologically determined to desire, Lacan locates desire as sustained by the fundamental lack at the core of subjectivity. A subject desires insofar as they attempt to fill out the lack. Desire is directed toward an *objet petit*

*a* (object little *a*) as that which is in *X* that is more than *X*. Desire is sustained insofar as it always fails to heal the gap or wound in subjectivity (is resistant to symbolization). Freud and Lacan agree that humans have a basic compulsion to *jouissance* (enjoyment) as an attempt to heal the wound or gap in the order of being. The inability to sustain and symbolize enjoyment creates a drive to desire. *Jouissance* is the excess of pleasure—pleasure is always incomplete without a surplus-pleasure that resists symbolization (enjoyment).

As far as psychoanalytic methodology is concerned, the goal of psychoanalytic critique is to rummage through the gaps in the symbolic and imaginary. To put it in Bitzer's (1968) vocabulary, psychoanalysis looks into the conditions for the emergence of rhetorical situations. Or, in Burke's terms the conditions for conflict at the heart of drama. That is, the psycho-rhetorical analyst views the ruptures/gaps that make a rhetorical situation possible to begin with. The basic lesson of psychoanalytic theory and criticism is that we basically vegetate in a universal lie until some contingent encounter occurs (could be a causal dinner re-mark or Ronnell's (2002) "stupid" comment).<sup>12</sup> The rhetorical analyst who capitalizes on psychoanalytic tools as a supplement to symbolic and imaginary criticism will, therefore be able to locate the traces of the Real at the center of any rhetorical edifice—and thus locate the enjoyment at work in normative rhetorical criticism—a task that will bring the rhetorical critic closer to conceptualizing motivation. Albeit closer, rhetorical criticism as a method of symbolic ordering will always encounter the Real at the center of such methodology. What makes rhetoric necessary is this contingent encounter.

This is critical because for Lacan, the bar of subjectivity is the root of suffering (the suffering as the root of conflict, which is the essence of human drama). In each of us, there is an absence that we cannot, by definition, think about because we cannot name it.<sup>13</sup> At the moment of the creation of the ego, the self, an absence is created. It is an absence as big as everything, because it is caused by the removal of a sense of unity with everything. However, the removal created “I,” gave birth to the sense of self, so “I” cannot get back to it since to do so “I” would not exist. And so what the subject wants, it cannot have. And so the desiring machine continues to circle by continually trying to fill the gap with all of the things that “I” think “I” am hungry for. So, this is how Lacan metaphorically interpreted Freud: (1) sex is decentered from the center of all things since it is a deeper desire which includes all desire that drives us on, (2) the hero of the Oedipus story is no longer a young boy, and (3) Lacan recognized that all of his theory, even the Imaginary and Real, occurs at the level of the Symbolic—since one cannot imagine a world without symbols when the world of symbols is always already given. But how does this reconceptualization of Freud influence Burke’s usage of Freud in defining the subject of Dramatism? And, what happened to Marx? In order to answer these questions, we must read the Lacanian subject across Burke’s public (Marx) and private (Freud) subject of conflict.<sup>14</sup> We can accomplish this task by comparing and contrasting Burke’s definition of the human being and the Lacanian subject to explain a fundamentally BurkeLacanian subject.

## **THE BURKELACANIAN SUBJECT**

In order to be organized about our investigation of the BurkeLacanian subject, I will analyze each of the components of Burke's "Definition of Man," and explain the Lacanian supplements/modifications. Burke's (1966) first characteristic of the human is "the symbol-using (symbol-making, symbol-misusing) animal" (p. 16). In precisely what sense does the BurkeLacanian subject "use" symbols, "make" symbols, and "mis-use" symbols? To answer this question requires a revisitation to the Burkeian "dialectical animal." Namely, humans are "more than motion" in the sense that they are a "merger of active and passive" as irreducible motivational loci residing in the human being (Burke, 1969b, p. 40). As this distinction applies to the BurkeLacanian subject, we might say that the Real acts, and the Symbolic and Imaginary move.<sup>15</sup> With the merger of the Real as active and the Symbolic and Imaginary as passive defenses, the BurkeLacanian subject uses symbols insofar as they provide protection from the traumatic kernel of being. The BurkeLacanian subject is motivated by the dynamically irreducible motivational loci of action (the Real) and motion (the Symbolic and Imaginary)—both of which reside in the human psyche.

### **Making and mis-using symbols**

How does the BurkeLacanian subject make and mis-use symbols? The making and mis-using portion of the symbolic are conjoined. Specifically, the process of symbol-making is the result of a retroactive process of symbol mis-using—retroactive in the sense that the symbol is not consciously known to be mis-used in the first place. The problem is that the symbol is always already mis-used, and as a result re-made to

establish a consistency to symbolic order. This is the function of the quilting points in any symbolic structure. The Lacanian concept of “ideological quilting” is all that is needed to explain this point. Žižek (2002b) explained “ideological quilting”:

In the ideological space float signifiers like ‘freedom,’ ‘state,’ ‘justice,’ ‘peace’ . . . and then their chain is supplemented with some master-signifier (‘Communism’) which retroactively determines their (Communist) meaning: ‘freedom’ is effective only through surmounting the bourgeois formal freedom, which is merely a form of slavery; the ‘state’ is the means by which the ruling class guarantees the conditions of its rule; market exchange cannot be ‘just and equitable’ because the very form of equivalent exchange between labor and capital implies exploitation; ‘war’ is inherent to class society as such; only the socialist revolution can bring about lasting ‘peace,’ and so forth. (Liberal-democratic ‘quilting’ would, of course, produce a quite different articulation of meaning; conservative ‘quilting’ a meaning opposed to both previous fields, and so on). (p. 102)

The making and mis-using of symbols thus has a direct relation to the Lacanian thesis concerning the relation between signifier and signified: instead of the linear, immanent, necessary progression according to which meaning unfolds itself from some initial kernel, we have a radically contingent process of retroactive production of meaning. A symbol is made when it takes on new meaning based on contingent encounters, thus proving its mis-use in retroactive fashion. The quilting point (point de caption) “fixes the meaning of the preceding elements: that is to say, it retroactively submits them to some code, it regulates their mutual relations according to this code (for example, in the case we mentioned, according to the code which regulates the Communist universe of meaning)” (Žižek, 2002b, p. 103). This regulation of the mutual relations of signifiers in an ideological code is the regulation of the meaning of a symbol that is made and retroactively mis-used relative to its previous use to stabilize the ideological quilt.

This idea of ideological quilting might be further understood in relation to/with the Lacanian “big Other” (a.k.a. “Autre”). The big Other is “where the authority of the symbolic order is assumed to lie” (Kay, 2003, p. 159). For example, if I say “I declare this meeting over,” then the point of this speech act is to register in the big Other that the meeting is closed (Žižek, 2001b, p. 98). Belief in such authority equates to supposing that there is something additional to the symbolic order which props it up. It is precisely the quilting point that holds the place of the big Other. Žižek (2002b) explained that the place holding of “the big Other occurs in the synchronous code, in the diachronous signifier’s chain: a proper Lacanian paradox in which a synchronous structure exists only in so far as it is itself embodied in One, in an exceptional singular element” (p. 103). The synchronous code and the diachronous signifier’s chain is to be understood in the distinction between language and discourse. The synchronous structure exists in both the conscious and Unconscious and refers to the signifying structure in each domain. That is, there is a synchronous structure of the conscious and a synchronous structure of the Unconscious (as, for Lacan, the “Unconscious is structured like a language). Discourse refers to the temporal relation whereby contingent encounters of the Unconscious synchronous structure overlaps with the conscious synchronous structure—thereby creating a “moment” in time that is uncanny. So, the quilting point is the place of the big Other in the conscious synchronous code (the Symbolic), and exists through the repression of the obscene “unwritten” in the diachronous discursive chain. This idea of the quilting point here informs Burke’s idea of God terms by invoking the repressive function in the psyche.

In referring to god terms as a “title of titles,” Burke (1970) wrote of the “empty” place-holding function of the god-terms:

[W]ith a movement towards a title of titles (the unifying principle that is to be found in a sentence, considered as a “title” for the situation it refers to): such a movement is towards a kind of *emptying*, it is a *via negative*. (Thus, recall Hegel’s observation that, when you go from this being to that being and the other being, and so on, until you have a term for “Pure Being,” such “Pure Being” is indistinguishable from “Nothing,” for there is not a single thing you can point to as an example of “Pure Being.” And recall here Heidegger’s use of Nothing as the contextual counterpart, or “ground,” of Being.). The stress in the fourth analogy is not upon this negative element, but upon the search for a title of titles, an over-all term (which turns out to have this negative principle as an essential part of its character). (p. 25)

The function of the “over-all term” is to give consistency to the Symbolic. Because “god-terms” have an “emptying” movement “via negative,” the god-terms have the characteristic of “Nothing” as its essential character. This corresponds to the Lacanian idea of ideological quilting since the “god-term” is the “signifier without the signified,” or the very location of the quilting point. The point for the critic is to examine the Symbolic aspect of the BurkeLacanian psyche in order to detect “behind the dazzling splendor of the element which holds it together (‘God,’ ‘Country,’ ‘Party,’ ‘Class’ . . .)” the “self-referential, tautological, performative operation” (Žižek, 2002b, p. 99).

The point of all of this is to shed light on the very conditions whereby Burke’s human animal uses, makes, and mis-uses symbols. The BurkeLacanian psyche as constituted by the Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real *uses* symbols as a defense against encountering the Real.<sup>16</sup> The Imaginary plays a central role in the *making* of Symbols when threatened by the Real. It does so by searching for a “signifier without signified” to hold the place of the big Other to give the Symbolic positive consistency. However, this

creation is a farce as the quilting point is merely a self-referential, tautological, performative operation that is empty of its meaning. Thus, when threatened by a contingent encounter, the place-holding function of this “signifier without signified” is radically exposed—lying naked the “mis-use” of the symbol as it always already was. By making the “mis-used” symbol, the BurkeLacanian psyche gains a false consistency to the Symbolic by repressing into the Unconscious the symbol’s own irrelevance. In this sense, the dynamic tension between action and motion resides within the BurkeLacanian psyche as two irreducible motivational loci through the dialectic of Real (action), and Imaginary and Symbolic (motion).

### **Inventor of the negative**

Having addressed the first feature of Burke’s human, we can examine the second question concerning the BurkeLacanian subject: In what sense is the BurkeLacanian subject inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative)? We might start with Burke’s (1970) observation of the negative as an “intuitive feeling”: “For if man is the symbol-using animal, and if the ultimate test of symbolicity is an intuitive feeling for the principle of the negative, then such ‘transcendental’ operations as the Heideggerian idea of ‘Nothing’ may reveal in their purity a kind of *Weltanschauung* that is imperfectly but inescapably operating in all of us” (p. 21). Thus, the natural realms which symbols symbolize will “be *necessarily* different, inasmuch as the translation of the *extra-symbolic* into *symbols* is a translation of something into terms of what it is not” (Burke, 1970, p. 22). The “intuitive feeling” for the principle of the negative exists as a precursor to the movement (note motion, not action) of the extra-symbolic to the symbolic. The



BurkeLacanian subject is precisely in the irreducible gap between the extra-symbolic and the symbolic—barred from both realms, yet subjected to them.

The BurkeLacanian subject as always already vulnerable to the symbolic is intricately linked with Burke's concept of invention. As previously noted, Burke was hesitant to accept the invention clause of this definitional characteristic since he was uncertain whether or not the human invented language (which is the precursor to the negative as a principle characteristic of language—no language, no negative). But in what sense might the BurkeLacanian subject have invented the negative? Precisely, the negative is invented through fantasy as the “primordial form of *narrative*, which serves to occult some original deadlock” (Žižek, 1997, p. 10). The primordial form of narrative is the result of fantasy's endeavor to stage the “impossible” scene of castration—the primordial loss which allows the subject to enter the symbolic order (the function of the negative that “divides/castrates” the human from natural motion). Thus, the negative serves a castrating function by moving from the extra-symbolic to the symbolic.

The idea of fantasy as the part of the human psyche that invents the negative is apparent in Lacan's answer to the question: “Why do we tell stories?” His answer is that “narrative as such emerges in order to resolve some fundamental antagonism by rearranging its terms into temporal succession. It is thus the very form of narrative which bears witness to some repressed antagonism” (Žižek, 1997, pp. 10-11). Žižek (1997) explained that the result of the narrative resolution is “the *petitio principii* of the temporal loop—the narrative silently presupposes as already given what it purports to reproduce (the narrative of ‘primordial accumulation’ effectively explains nothing, since it already

presupposes a worker behaving like a full-blown capitalist)” (p. 11). Therefore, if the BurkeLacanian subject *invented* the negative, it did so through creating fantasy to facilitate the castration as the necessary function for the subject’s entry into the symbolic. This is the fundamental teaching of Lacan in Seminar XI regarding the cogito as that which results “from a forced choice of thought: the subject is confronted with a choice ‘to think or to be’: if he chooses being, he loses all (including being itself, since he has being only as thing); if he chooses thought, he gets it, but truncated of the part where thought intersects with being—this lost part of thought, this “un-thought” inherent to thought itself, is the Unconscious” (Žižek, 2002a, pp. 146-147). In other words, the very condition for the BurkeLacanian subject’s entrance into the symbolic is the existence of the negative’s castrating function as that which gives the human animal action and thus separates the human animal from its “natural condition.”

Once the negative serves its castrating function, the subject makes an expanding motion into the symbolic. This is the parenthesized condition of Burke’s human as “inventor of the negative (or moralized by the negative).” For Burke, being moralized is akin to order. Burke (1970) wrote “‘temptation’ is intrinsic to the tautological cycle of terms implicit in the idea of Order (the most ‘crucial’ condition of all being the principle of negativity which ‘inevitably’ implies the ‘freedom’ to negate a negation, to disobey a thou-shalt-not)” (p. 222). He continued, “the thou-shalt-not is intrinsic to Order, inasmuch as Order, or Dominion, involves the negativities of Law” (Burke, 1970, p. 222). For Burke, then, the human is moralized by the Order of the Law that establishes the “thou-shalt-not.” The “thou-shalt-nots” come directly from God. Thus, Burke might

appear to be in agreement with Dostoyevsky's proposition that "if God doesn't exist then everything is permitted," since if God does not establish a negative in the form of creating the "thou-shalt-nots," then Eve's eating of the apple would not have been a moral wrong.

However, one might find a very different reading in terms of the BurkeLacanian subject. The crucial part to not overlook in Burke's analysis is the "freedom to negate a negation" since it implies the idea that because there is negation, there is freedom. This is the thesis that parallels Lacan's famous reversal of Dostoyevsky's proposition when he wrote: "If God does not exist, everything is prohibited." If we follow Burke's reasoning we find that the negative creates the conditions for two freedoms: (1) the freedom to justify violating any "merely human constraints and considerations" in order to act directly on behalf of God, and (2) the freedom to violate the law itself.<sup>17</sup> Are not both of these conditions that result from the negative a way of saying that "everything is permitted" because God exists? What is key in understanding this is the conception of God as a universal God versus a conception of God of multiple interpretations. The Lacanian statement refers to the idea that if God in the traditional sense as a universal model does not exist, then everything is allowed. This is precisely because "God" holds the place in the Symbolic order as the big Other (the quilting point, or point de caption). If God does not exist in the ideological space, then there is a fundamental dis-order since it is precisely the quilting point's function to give ideological consistency.

The BurkeLacanian subject is moved by the negative since the inconsistencies that are quilted by the "God" function set the very conditions for morality. In other

words, since the quilting point occurs based on contingent encounters, the conditions of morality are dynamically expanded *ad infinitum* to establish new rules for behavior. This is how the BurkeLacanian subject “moves” from one prohibition to another. Thus, we get a series of exceptions to the rules based on the contingent encounters. For instance, “we find a whole series of products deprived of their malignant property: coffee without caffeine, cream without fat, beer without alcohol. . . And the list goes on: what about virtual sex as sex without sex, the Colin Powell doctrine of warfare with no casualties (on our side, of course) as warfare without warfare” (Žižek, 2003). We thus are moralized by the negative in the sense that we learn the conditions of right and wrong. So we go from “Opium is great!,” to “Opium is not good *except* in certain medical procedures.” In this way, the BurkeLacanian subject is moralized about opium. Žižek (2003) reminds us that “no wonder marijuana is so popular among liberals who want to legalize it—it already IS a kind of ‘opium without opium.’”

### **Separated from nature by self-made instruments**

Having analyzed the conditions of the negative, we can move on to Burke’s (1966) third clause that the human animal is, “Separated from his natural condition by instruments of his own making” (p. 13). There is a direct parallel here between Burke and Lacan. Namely, that which separates the human animal from “nature” is the symbolic order. Burke borrowed from Freud the idea of “terministic screens” which forms a cut between subjectivity and external reality. For instance, Burke (1966) wrote, “In Freud’s sense an action is ‘symbolic’ when, as interpreted in terms of his particular ‘terministic screen,’ it reveals the presence of a neurotic motive involving ‘repressions’ due to the

particular kind of ‘Unconscious’ which he postulates as a locus of motives” (p. 64). Burke (1966) had in mind here some photographs that he once saw: “They were different photographs of the same objects, the difference being that they were made with different color filters. Here something so ‘factual’ as a photograph revealed notable distinctions in texture, and even in form, depending upon which color filter was used for the documentary description of the event being recorded” (p. 45). Since the terministic screen is in the domain of the symbolic, it is restricted from the Unconscious. This corresponds to one of Žižek’s (2002b) alternative definitions of the Unconscious as “the form of thought whose ontological status is not that of thought, that is to say, the form of thought external to the thought itself—in short, some Other Scene external to the thought whereby the form of the thought is already articulated in advance” (p. 19). He continued, “The symbolic order is precisely such a formal order which supplements and/or disrupts the dual relationship of ‘external’ factual reality and ‘internal’ subjective experience” (Žižek, 2002b, p. 19). In this way, the BurkeLacanian subject is separated from “external nature” by its entry into the Symbolic—the entry that occurred with the necessarily self-alienating “I.”

### **Goaded by the spirit of hierarchy**

The fourth part of Burke’s (1966) human animal involves being “goaded by the spirit of hierarchy” or “moved by a sense of order” (p. 15). Hierarchical order is thus a “force” that works within the human animal. But *why* is the human moved by a sense of order? What is it about the human that needs order? The motive for such order is far from articulated by Burke. We might supplement the idea that humans are moved by a sense of

order by adding that the movement toward order<sup>18</sup> is motivated by a sense of fearing freedom—as in, for instance, Schelling’s (2002) *Clara* dialogue where Clara observes that “the sight of freedom—not the freedom that is usually so-called, the true and real one—would have to be unbearable to man, even though people talk about it continually and praise it at every instant” (p. 28). In another piece, Schelling (1815) echoes Clara’s statement: “most people are frightened by this abyssal freedom . . . where they see a flash of freedom, they turn away from it as if from an utterly injurious flash of lightning and they feel prostrated by freedom as an appearance that comes from the ineffable, from eternal freedom, from where there is no ground whatsoever” (p. 78). This directly parallels the language of the Burkeian (1984a) abyss: “men build their cultures by huddling together, nervously loquacious, at the edge of the abyss” (p. 272). When we combine the ideas of Schelling and Burke, we find that humans are afraid of the freedom of the abyss. This evokes the words of Le Boétie (1988) who wrote, “Freedom is the only thing which men have no desire for, and it seems as though the only reason this is so is that if they desired it, they would have it” (p. 43).

As far as Lacanian scholarship on hierarchy and freedom is concerned, we might turn to Johnston’s (2006) psychoanalytic work on Schelling’s idea of freedom. From a Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective, the “abyssal freedom” is “not ‘unconscious’ simply in the sense of being structurally incompatible with consciousness. Rather, the spectre of this freedom is barred from consciousness more for defensive than for structural reasons” (Johnston, 2006, p. 45). He continued, “such autonomy is unconscious not just because the groundless founding act generating consciousness cannot itself become conscious;

this autonomy is kept unconscious through repressive strategies also because it is disturbing—even, in some cases, terrifying” (p. 45). The Schellingian freedom is, in essence, groundless, there is no transcendent law, no higher, normative principle of ethico-moral reasoning, governing its employment. This directly corresponds with how “Lacan would put it: ‘there is no Other of the Other’ or ‘the big Other does not exist’” (p.45). It is precisely because the trauma of freedom is repressed that the Symbolic hierarchy is invented. The human is “goaded by the spirit of hierarchy” precisely because it is an escape from the trauma of freedom. Put another way, the BurkeLacanian subject is nervously loquacious at the edge of the abyss, held captive by a hierarchical Symbolic register that claims to be its savior—but never able to fully save since the freedom of the Real continually breaks through the hierarchical register, requiring the hierarchy to continually re-establish itself.

### **Rotten with perfection**

The last component of Burke’s human animal is that they are “rotten with perfection.” In other words, the human is always already moving toward perfection. The entelechial drive may very well parallel Ronell’s (2004) idea of the “noncontingency of addiction” that “points to the existence of a toxic drive” (p. 23). In this sense, the human animal as “rotten with perfection” directly parallels Lacan’s concept of drive—we might say that humans are driven by perfection which makes them “rotten.” For Burke, perfection is strictly as linguistic as the negative since they both never exist in nature. In terms of the BurkeLacanian subject, perfection may also be located in the subject’s relation to the ego-ideal which is in the realm of the virtual. Žižek (2002a) wrote that the

double reflection “produces a symbolic point the nature of which is purely virtual: neither what I immediately see (‘reality’ itself) nor the way others see me (the ‘real’ inverted image of reality) but the way I see the others seeing me” (p. 13). It is in the mirror stage that the subject encounters an “imago” of a whole, stable, autonomous self that presents the infant with an ideal image of their self. Since the infant makes a “connection” to this ideal image through identification, the infant enters a lifelong quest to fulfill the ideal of this image. This idea of the ego-Ideal is thus at the heart of the quest for perfection. Moreover, it is in the very failure to achieve the ego-ideal that drive enters the equation.

Thus, we might say that the BurkeLacanian subject is “rotten with perfection” because it is stuck in the middle of the dialectic of desire. The “rotten” status of perfection lies in the inherent dialectic between desire and enjoyment which gives rise to the Lacanian object petit a. Žižek (1997) points out that: “desire and *jouissance* are inherently antagonistic, even exclusive: desire’s *raison d’être* (or ‘utility function,’ to use Richard Dawkin’s term) is not to realize its goal, to find full satisfaction, but to reproduce itself as desire. . . . It is the famous Lacanian *objet petit a* that mediates between the incompatible domains of desire and *jouissance*” (39). Žižek (1997) stopped here to question how desire (as an infinite metonymy) slides from one object to another. Specifically, he asked, “How can the subject—whose ontological status is that of a void, of a pure gap sustained by the endless sliding from one signifier to another—none the less get hooked on a particular object which thereby starts to function as the object-cause of his desire?” (p. 81). Žižek’s (1997) answer is that “the object which functions as the ‘cause of desire’ must be in itself a metonymy of lack—that is to say, an object which is



not simply lacking but, in its very positivity, gives body to a lack. The Lacanian *objet petit a* is such a ‘negative magnitude,’ a ‘something that stands for nothing,’ *a* above the ‘minus phi’ of castration” (p. 81). In this sense, the BurkeLacanian subject is “rotten with perfection” as it is trapped in the dialectic of desire and enjoyment. As such, the BurkeLacanian subject attempts to give body to the lack embedded in the dialectic through *objets petit a*. Since the *objets petit a* overlap in the domain of the symbolic, the dramatic method is given its existence since without the dialectic of desire and enjoyment, drama would cease to exist. More simply, if no *objets petit a*, then no conflict and by extension no drama.

This idea brings us back to the Burkeian merger of Freud and Marx since the *objet petit a* is the intermediate Thing between the public and private subjects of conflict. Using Marx’s terminology, the *objet petit a* is the fetishistic characteristic of the commodity. That is, the surplus in the commodity is something in the commodity that is more than just the thing itself. In other words, the commodity stands for something other than the plain object that it is. Žižek (2002b) explained the connection between the thing in the object which is more than the object itself (commodity fetish) and the Lacanian *objet petit a*:

We search in vain for it in positive reality because it has no positive consistency—because it is just an objectification of a void, of a discontinuity opened in reality by the emergence of the signifier. It is the same with gold: we search in vain for its positive, physical features for that X which makes of it the embodiment of richness; or, to use an example from Marx, it is the same with a commodity; we search in vain among its positive properties for the feature which constitutes its value (and not only its use-value). (p. 95).

The BurkeLacanian subject is “rotten with perfection” in its commodity fetishism—in its private obsession with *objets petit a* of a cultural psyche.<sup>19</sup> More specifically, the public *objets petit a* are the very cause of “the parallax gap, that unfathomable X which forever eludes the symbolic grasp, and thus causes the multiplicity of symbolic perspectives” (Žižek, 2006, p. 18). The multiplicity of symbolic perspectives are thus dependent on some “excessive” feature that resists symbolization. This “excessive” feature is what makes the BurkeLacanian subject rotten—unable to achieve the perfection whereby the excessive is eliminated. The bridge between Freud and Marx here is apparent—the attempts to eliminate the excessive features of private ideology are at the heart of public drama.

#### **THE BURKELACANIAN SUBJECT AS A SUBJECT OF RHETORIC**

Before explaining how the BurkeLacanian subject is rhetorical and providing critical examples for the application of the BurkeLacanian subject in rhetorical methods, we might pause to summarize the fundamental features in these first three chapters that constitute the BurkeLacanian subject:

- (1) The BurkeLacanian subject posits the fundamental importance of the Unconscious to the study of rhetoric since the psyche situates the conscious symbolic world.
- (2) With regard to the basic Dramatistic distinction that “people act, things move,” the BurkeLacanian subject finds that “the Real acts, the Imaginary and Symbolic move.” The BurkeLacanian subject is motivated by the dynamically

irreducible motivational loci of action (the Real) and motion (the Symbolic and Imaginary)—both of which reside in the psyche.

- (3) The BurkeLacanian subject possesses eight varieties of the Unconscious:
- a. The Unconscious of bodily processes that return from the repressed when something goes terribly wrong.
  - b. The Unconscious that constitutes the “gap” as the precursor to the universal incorporation of the past with the present whereby the signifier sets the incorporation in motion.
  - c. The Unconscious that is a closed meaning system, complete within itself (as is the system of language) whereby parts of the meaning system are recallable but not explicitly recalled.
  - d. The Unconscious as the hiding place for “subpersonalities” that only come out when confronted with contingent experiences that exceed Imaginary and Symbolic appropriation.
  - e. The Unconscious that thinks outside of consciousness in order to deploy the logical conclusions that are not yet realized.
  - f. The Unconscious that stores unnoticed areas of speculation that are the very basis for a given terminology (the “leap of faith” for belief to exist).
  - g. The Unconscious that includes the category of “intuition” that results from the object petit a being permanently displaced/excessive to the Symbolic order.

- h. The Unconscious that is altogether ignorant of future contingent encounters.
- (4) The BurkeLacanian Unconscious makes it always already possible that there is no such thing as an accident, which directly implicates conceptions of responsibility.
  - (5) The BurkeLacanian psyche as constituted by the Symbolic, Imaginary, and Real *uses* symbols as a defense against encountering the Real. The Imaginary plays a central role in the *making* of Symbols when threatened by the Real.
  - (6) The BurkeLacanian subject is precisely in the irreducible gap between the extra-symbolic and the symbolic—barred from both realms, yet subjected to them.
  - (7) The BurkeLacanian subject is separated from “external nature” by its entry into the Symbolic—the entry that occurred with the necessarily self-alienating “I.”
  - (8) The BurkeLacanian subject is moved by the negative since the inconsistencies that are quilted by the “God” function set the very conditions for morality. That is, since the quilting point occurs based on contingent encounters, the conditions of morality are dynamically expanded ad infinitum to establish new rules for behavior.
  - (9) The BurkeLacanian subject is nervously loquacious at the edge of the abyss, held captive by a hierarchical Symbolic register that claims to be its savior—but never able to fully save since the freedom of the Real continually breaks

through the hierarchical register, requiring the hierarchy to continually re-establish itself.

- (10) The BurkeLacanian subject is “rotten with perfection” as it is trapped in the dialectic of desire and enjoyment. As such, the BurkeLacanian subject attempts to give body to the lack embedded in the dialectic through *objets petit a*.

We might quickly note that the use of the term “BurkeLacanian” is appropriate since the subject explained here is neither Burkeian nor Lacanian. Rather, it is heavily influenced by both of them: Lacan supplying the language of psyche, whereas Burke provides the language of drama. But in what sense is the BurkeLacanian subject rhetorical? To address this question requires the ability for the BurkeLacanian subject to be used for the purposes of rhetorical critique.

In order to put the BurkeLacanian subject into the service of rhetorical critique, we should understand the basic idea that the BurkeLacanian subject is rhetorical insofar as it is situated in relation to the Symbolic and Imaginary. The BurkeLacanian subject beckons forth the Lacanian task of rhetoric “as a kind of analytic engagement with the conditions of the production of subjectivity and knowledge” (Lundberg, 2004, p. 500). It also constitutes the dimensions of a rhetorical text by locating human drama as an irreducibly private and public subject of conflict. By fusing private and public subjects of conflict, the BurkeLacanian subject introduces desire and enjoyment as political factors in human affairs. This is not all that far removed from Aristotelian conceptions of rhetoric whereby the rhetorical critic may observe, in any given situation, desire and

enjoyment as potential means of persuasion. In this sense, the BurkeLacanian subject introduces the language of drama as a specific focal point. This parallels Gunn's (2004) observation of locating the Lacanian tools in particular dramatistic scenes: the Lacanian "fundamental fantasy concerns persuasion in charismatic contexts: Whether the scene is a president addressing the country, a talk show host counseling others to be sexy, or a psychic reading a palm, the success or failure of a conscious fantasy depends on a rhetor's ability to promise and hoard the *a*" (p. 11).

In treating text as psyche, the next two chapters will locate the BurkeLacanian subject within rhetorical critique. Chapter five will examine the BurkeLacanian method of what I call "Ideographic Cluster Quilting" by fusing Burke's associational cluster criticism with Lacan's analysis of signifiers in the process of ideological quilting. In doing so, we will revisit McGee's (1990) concern about the practice of text construction in text, context, and fragmentation of American culture. The chapter will also introduce Kristeva's concept of "abject" as a focal point to approach the study of textual fragments in a "cultural psyche." Chapter six employs the BurkeLacanian corpus to the study of Ideographic Cluster Quilting by examining the quilt surrounding the figure of the "illegal immigrant" as abject in a cultural psyche.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

<sup>1</sup> Aune is referring to Marx's argument that capitalism will reach a limit and collapse on its own. Thus, there is no need to become revolutionary because the collapse of capitalism is inevitable. However, Aune is quick to refute this claim with Marx's argument that change will accelerate and be more positive if one chooses to be a revolutionary.

<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, the Marxist influence on BurkeLacanian theory will allow us to analyze the power of ideology in a cultural psyche. The BurkeLacanian theory of the power in a cultural psyche will become more apparent in chapters five and six of this dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> The term "subject" comes with a lot of baggage, so some Burkeian scholars may object by arguing that is unfair to Burke to force him to have a theory of the subject if it is so encumbered. There are at least two points to be made in reaction to such a potential objection. First, the terms "human" and "being" also have a lot of baggage and these are terms that Burke himself chose to use so as to not be afraid of the potential baggage. Second, Burke did have a theory of the subject proper. This theory is to be found in his insistence that humans were not mere objects. More simply, it is impossible to have drama without a subject.

<sup>4</sup> Recall that that Burke used the term "problem play" to refer to the Marxian drama that occurs in the public sphere. In other words, Marx from a Dramatistic

perspective, Marx introduced the “playwrite” of a problem play in capitalist public relations. Burke use the term “closet drama” to refer to the type of drama for Freud’s “playwrite.”

<sup>5</sup> This refers to Burke’s (1957) distinction in Philosophy and Literary Form between the Freudian private conflicts and Marxian public conflicts as the exist within a Dramatistic perspective. See Burke (1957), p. 291.

<sup>6</sup> If there is any space for the Cartesian subject in the theory of the Lacanian subject, the Cartesian subject would be one aspect of the psyche constituted by the Symbolic and Imaginary registers.

<sup>7</sup> The Heideggerian “thrownness” may appear as a contradiction to the Lacanian subject since there is nothing to be thrown. However the radical nothingness is that which exists prior to being. The subject is the answer to why there is something and not nothing in both the Lacanian subject and the Cartesian subject. If there is primordial nothingness then there is infinite possibility since there is no constraint by “some-things.”

<sup>8</sup> The “imagined self” is something that blind children pass through as well. Thus, this is the metaphorical interpretation of the mirror stage. Blind children may get a “reflection” of self through the other senses instead of sight. For example, stench smells, bumping into objects, feeling hungry, having to shit, etc. are all things that develop a sense of self through the disjointed nature of their body and “world.”

<sup>9</sup> While this is the most common response, the “reflection” of a self as other-than-world is the critical point of this metaphor.



<sup>10</sup> Again, the mother is a metaphor for the “dreamy bliss” prior to the fall/castration. It is irrelevant of the infant is bottle fed, etc.

<sup>11</sup> This is also how we know there is a Real—because the symbol can never fully become itself.

<sup>12</sup> This also parallels Burke’s concept of “recalcitrant” factors. I will discuss this further in the next chapter.

<sup>13</sup> This “unnamable” absence parallels Biesecker’s (1997) explanation of the Burkeian negative: “The principle of the negative is more originary than the movement of the dialectic; in fact, it ensures the movement of the dialectic precisely because the dialectic is rooted in it. . . . Thus, in distinction to Hegel, Heidegger, and even Bergson from whom he takes his cue, Burke steps behind the ‘Idea of Nothing’ that is for them ‘the metaphysical ground of being’ and recovers out from under it the ‘Idea of No’—‘a kind of *Weltanschauung* that is imperfectly but inescapably operating in all of us’.”

<sup>14</sup> This split between public and private is not as clear as Burke attempted to make it. The next chapter will advance the idea of a cultural psyche as a way to demonstrate how this false distinction may be productively approached.

<sup>15</sup> This is a break from the strictly Burkeian reading of action and motion, but an alteration that runs the distinction between action and motion through the dynamic BurkeLacanian psyche—a psyche that is not properly Burkeian or Lacanian.

<sup>16</sup> This posits an area of the psyche that is “pre-symbolic.”

<sup>17</sup> “Superego” is what does the permitting or prohibiting.

<sup>18</sup> The BurkeLacanian subject may move toward perfection after its entry into the Symbolic. However, the function of ideological quilting is that the Symbolic fails when it encounters the Real. The function of ideological quilting is the ability to re-establish the order that previously existed. In this way, the BurkeLacanian subject may move only insofar as it is, in one sense, already ordered (before dis-ordered).

<sup>19</sup> The concept of a “cultural psyche” will be fully articulated in the next two chapters.

**SECTION TWO**

**IDEOGRAPHIC CLUSTER QUILTING IN THE CULTURAL**

**PSYCHE: A BURKELACANIAN METHOD**

## **Chapter Five**

### **A Description of Ideographic Cluster Quilting**

The three previous chapters of this dissertation were theoretical in their orientation. Chapter two focused on the theoretical concept of the Unconscious as an important category of study for rhetorical scholars. Chapters three and four laid out the theoretical constitutive features of the BurkeLacanian Unconscious and subject. This chapter is the turning point from a largely theoretical purpose to an articulation of a BurkeLacanian method.<sup>1</sup> While there were a few “contingent” examples provided, there has thus far been nothing to point at. If there is a problem with such a theoretical emphasis, then the only solution is a reformulation of its terms into a context of enunciation. The staging of a context for enunciating theory is a tricky and old issue concerning the relation between theory and “objects” of criticism (i.e., Hegel and Wittgenstein). According to Žižek (2002a), what is at stake in the articulation of a method that will be shown in terms of examples is “not an ‘illustration’ of general propositions—examples here are not ‘mere examples’ but ‘scenic presentations’ which render manifest its unspoken presuppositions” (p. 145). This chapter will demonstrate that the “unspoken presuppositions” of rhetorical methodology take an ideological turn when the critic makes aware the “unspoken presuppositions” of any symbolic order.<sup>2</sup>

In an essay entitled “Where Theory and Practice Meet,” Wilson (2003) wrote that “criticism is the primary activity that drives rhetorical scholarship in the field of Speech and Communication Studies. . . . [I]t has subsumed the once prominent quest for

methods. Criticism occupies the greatest proportion of our journal space; consequently, the ability to produce quality criticism is an essential skill for academic success” (p.1). He continued by arguing that “criticism is the endeavor that quickens or ‘gives life’ to contemporary rhetorical scholarship, and without it, rhetoric would die in departments across the country” (p.1). This observation is not without the theorization of resistance toward this trend. Beginning in the 1970s, Baskerville (1977) stated the well-known question to rhetorical scholars by asking, “Must we all be rhetorical critics?” (p. 107). This question was framed around the popular work of Edwin Black (1965), Walter Fisher (1969), Roderick Hart (1971), Earnest Bormann (1972), Karlyn Kohrs Campbell (1973), Bruce Gronbeck (1975), Michael McGee (1980), and others who raised the question of not only rhetoric’s scope but also of the meaning and purpose of criticism. Since then, a recent five-year survey of rhetorical scholarship in the National Communication Association suggests that we *are* now a field of critics (Wilson, 2003).

The purpose of this chapter is to outline a BurkeLacanian method for the criticism of Ideographic Cluster Quilts in order to assess the contributions that such a method may offer rhetorical scholars for the criticism of texts. My interpretation of rhetorical criticism falls in line with Wilson (2003) when he wrote: “Whether we describe our activity as interpretation, re-presentation, alignment, analysis, discovery or creation, rhetorical critics engage in a magical performance to transform the invisible into the visible, to disrupt and reorient established habits of sight” (p. 7). I would extend this line of thought into a general definition of rhetorical criticism that is principally concerned with Žižek’s (2006) conception of critical thinking. That is, after reading a piece of rhetorical

criticism, “the reader should not simply have learned something new: the point is, rather, to make him or her aware of another—disturbing—side of something he or she knew all the time” (Žižek, 2006, p. x). In this sense, I posit the idea that all rhetorical criticism involves the criticism of ideology since the “disrupting” or “disturbing side” of texts is intricately intertwined with the power of the text. Put another way, the critic’s methodology should accomplish two tasks: (1) if the reader is ignorant of power in a text, the critic’s task is to make known the disturbing power of the text, and (2) if the reader is well aware of the power of a text, the critic’s task is to make known the disturbing aspect of power so as to formulate a response to such disruption. In this sense, I agree with Lentricchia (1983) who argued that a method of criticism “is the production of knowledge to the ends of power and, maybe, of social change” (p. 11). In this way, rhetorical criticism is concerned with ideology. Even reference to extra-ideological coercion (economic, legal, political, sexual, etc.) is an ideological gesture par excellence since the extra-ideological content is dialectically interconnected with the ideological content. Thus, rhetorical critics should seek a method that analyzes both ideological and extra-ideological content to be more effective in their task of criticism.

The bridge between ideological and extra-ideological content is perhaps best understood within the context of rhetorical homologies. Brummett (2004) explained that, “In moving down a level of abstraction from homology into particular experiences and texts, conflicts and contradictions may arise. . . . Each text or experience that embodies a homology thus entails its own ideological struggles and contradictions that arise from that embodiment in history” (p. 38). In this sense, there is a fundamental dialectic between the

formal characteristics of a rhetorical method and the texts that such method encounters. Brummett (2004) examined Burke's "Lexicon Rhetoricae" to argue that, "One cannot follow the form of a tragedy without invoking an ideology to say which qualities in a person are heroic and which are not, and thus ideology may help shape the elements that are ordered in form" (p. 17). In this way, rhetorical method and ideology are intricately intertwined.

Applying this concept of rhetorical criticism to the current dissertation forces us to question the scope of a BurkeLacanian critical method. Specifically, we might begin by asking: In what way is a BurkeLacanian method a critique of power that is embedded in ideology? To answer this question requires an examination of the work on Burke and ideology. Lentricchia (1983) argued that Burke should be read as a critic of ideology because "One of his most significant contributions to Marxist theory is his pressing of the difficult, sliding notion of ideology, bequeathed to us by *The German Ideology*, out of the areas of intellectual trickery and false consciousness and into the politically productive textual realms of practical consciousness—rhetoric, the literary, and the media of what he tellingly called 'adult education in America.'" (p. 23). Lentricchia also noted that, for Burke, the "political work of the hegemonic, as well as that of a would-be counter-hegemonic culture" is "most effectively carried through at the level of a culture's various verbal and non-verbal languages" (pp. 23-24).

For our purposes, there are two important details that come from Lentricchia's work. First, at the level of "verbal" languages, Burke was "doing Gramsci's work before anyone but Gramsci (and his censors) could read what would be called the *Prison*

*Notebooks*” (p. 37). This is not to go so far as to say that Burke is more important than Gramsci. Rather, it is to suggest that Burke was interested in the relationship between language, power, and hegemony (an ideological function). Second, at the level of “non-verbal” languages, psychoanalysis offers critical insight into the “non-verbal” content linked to ideology. Relying partially on the work of Terry Eagleton, Bygrave (1993) explained:

Though the term ideology is more or less absent from Freud’s writings, psychoanalysis is seen as potentially a powerful discourse of ideological critique: Projection, displacement, sublimation, condensation, repression, idealization, substitution, rationalization, disavowal: all of these are at work in the text of ideology, as much as in dream and fantasy; and this is one of the richest legacies Freud bequeathed to the critique of ideological consciousness. The list of Freudian vocabulary is a list also of a rhetorical vocabulary, the instruments of a critique. Perspective by incongruity, socialization, identification, hierarchy, courtship, transcendence, bureaucratization, act, scene, agent, agency and purpose, logomachy: these are Burke’s terms which, I shall argue, are similarly useful instruments of ideological critique. (p. 3)

I will explain in this chapter my agreement with Bygrave’s assessment by arguing that the intersection of Burke and Lacanian psychoanalysis may contribute to the ideological turn in rhetorical studies. Having analyzed the BurkeLacanian subject in previous chapters, we might note that at the most simple level, a BurkeLacanian hermeneutic contributes to the ideological turn by situating rhetorical dramas that are constitutive of competing ideologies within the registers of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real.

Rhetorical critics of ideology focus on the construction of rhetorical texts as they pertain to power. Wander (1983) argued for an ideological turn to rhetorical studies by arguing that ideological criticism is “much more than a perspective. It entertains possibilities for action, and the actions it considers may go beyond actions sanctioned in



the academy” (p. 204). In advancing this idea of ideological rhetorical criticism, McGee (1980) argued that “the clearest access to persuasion (and hence to ideology) is through the discourse used to produce it” and he suggested that “ideology in practice is a political language, preserved in rhetorical documents, with the capacity to dictate decision and control public belief and behavior” (pp. 4-5). More simply, to do rhetorical criticism is to do the work of ideological criticism. Thus, the linkage between a BurkeLacanian method and ideological criticism is critical to work through.

It is in this vein that this chapter will attempt to forge a path for interrogating the complementary features of a BurkeLacanian approach to ideological rhetorical criticism. I argue here that a BurkeLacanian approach contributes much to the study of ideological rhetorical criticism.<sup>3</sup> Specifically, there are two fundamental contributions: (1) the BurkeLacanian approach creates a schematic for locating objects that sustain ideology so that such objects may be situated in extra-ideological context, and (2) the BurkeLacanian approach adds to the rhetorical critic’s toolbox through examining the role of the signifier in ideological “belief.” In order to clarify the role of BurkeLacanian criticism in ideological critique, this chapter is structured into four parts. Part one explains what I call “ideographic cluster quilting” in order to clarify a BurkeLacanian approach to the criticism of texts. Part two examines the problematic of text construction that is subjected to analysis of cluster ideographic quilts. Part three puts this approach into practice by analyzing anti-immigration ideology in the cultural psyche. Finally, part four provides some implications to the analysis.

## IDEOGRAPHIC CLUSTER QUILTING

The BurkeLacanian approach is best understood through a conglomeration of two primary conceptual tools: Burke's "associational cluster analysis"<sup>4</sup> and Lacan's "ideological quilting." Burke developed associational cluster analysis as a method for examining terminology that appears in discourse. Burke (1973) wrote that "The work of every writer contains a set of implicit equations. He uses 'associational clusters.' And you may, by examining his work, find 'what goes with what' in these clusters—what kinds of acts and images and personalities and situations go with his notions of heroism, villainy, consolation, despair, etc." (p. 20). In other words, Burke's associational cluster analysis requires the rhetorical critic to do both of the following things: (1) the rhetorical critic analyzes a single text based on the traditional rhetorical model whereby the unified subject-rhetor creates a stable text (i.e., analyzing the U.S. President's State of the Union Address), and (2) the rhetorical critic analyzes the text by looking for the terms that surround certain ideals in the language. With such an emphasis, the rhetorical critic examines the micro-level of a larger drama in which the (sub)text exists.

The micro-level, or the subtext, is fragmented from the larger macro-level that may be called the public drama. This transfer to the larger public drama occurs through the process of association. In analyzing Burke's concept of association, Oravec (1989) concluded: "to effect the transfer of motives from the substructural to the superstructural level, a transfer of motives occurs in language" (p. 188). Oravec (1989) suggested that the substructural association of terms within a text "articulates, or 'bodies forth,' a strategy which encompasses its author's motivations" (p. 188). Marston and Rockwell

(1991) wrote that this textual articulation beckons “the author’s motivations to the reader on a superstructural level, the level of attitudes and ideas in the minds of the audience” (p. 65). As Oravec (1989) observed, an analysis of associational clusters in discourse may therefore reveal the power of the text in constructing the author’s identity, and possibly that of their audience.

To be clear here, Oravec, Marston, and Rockwell’s interpretation of Burke is to posit the substructural language as the author/rhetor’s text and the superstructural level to be that which occurs in the minds of the audience as a result of the text. The problem with this view is that there is yet a larger “superstructure” of language that transcends the time and space of the traditional rhetorical context. More simply, this emphasis on the language of speaker and audience ignores the larger social context by which the speaker/audience language is situated in the language of ideology that precedes that of the speaker/audience relation. Or, rather, we might say that the “substructural/superstructural” hermeneutic ignores the context of the larger social drama (namely the ideology and materiality that precedes and succeeds the context so that the “substructural/superstructural” language does not occur in a vacuum).

Since conflict is the essence of drama, so too might we conceive of public conflicts as the heart of public dramas.<sup>5</sup> The rhetorical scholar that studies public dramas is concerned, at least in part, with ideology. Toch (1965) defined ideology as that which “denotes a set of related beliefs held by a group of persons” (p. 4). To contextualize this definition, Toch (1965) articulated that “the ideology of a social movement is a statement of what the members of the movement are trying to achieve together, and what they wish

to affirm jointly” (p. 4). Thus, ideology is tantamount to belief that shapes the relation to/with public drama/conflict.

It is within the analysis of ideological belief that rhetorical scholars may learn from the Lacanian idea of ideological quilting. This requires us to understand the Lacanian language of “signifiers” as Burkeian “terms” that cluster in relation to other terms. Lacan (1993) described the signifier as that which “doesn’t just provide an envelope, a receptacle for meaning. It polarizes it, structures it, and brings it into existence. Without an exact knowledge of the order proper to the signifier and its properties, it’s impossible to understand anything whatsoever” (p. 260). This “understanding” is one that is both consistent and constantly changing. According to Lacan (1993), “the relationship between the signified and the signifier always appears fluid, always ready to come undone” (p. 261). The signifier thus functions in the realm of the Symbolic register and closely parallels McGee’s (1980) concept of the ideograph. Ideographs are “key ideological concepts such as ‘the people,’ ‘public trust,’ ‘liberty,’ and ‘equality,’ which serve as the consistent (because the signifier never changes) but flexible/unstable (because the signified is malleable and open to change) constitutive signs of American sociopolitical community” (Lucaites, 1998, p. 18). What is lacking in Burke’s associational cluster analytic method and McGee’s analysis of the ideograph is a critical lexicon to study how and why the signified content moves beneath the clusters of terms and/or ideographs.

More simply, Burke and McGee share a limited understanding of rhetoric by relegating it to the domain of the Lacanian psychic register of the Symbolic. The

inventiveness of rhetoric, or rather, the plasticity of rhetoric relies on the existence of empty signifiers where a symbolic identity can change “precisely and only in so far as my symbolic universe includes ‘empty signifiers’ which can be filled in by a new particular content” (Žižek, 1997, p. 94). As previously noted, these “empty signifiers” are the “ideographs” that appear as terms that “cluster” around other terms. What Lacan brings to the conceptualization of the Symbolic is its relation to the register of the Real and to the concept of fantasy.

Worth noting here is that the Real relates to the Symbolic through repression. According to Lacanian theory, “a human subject can acquire and maintain a certain distance towards (symbolically mediated) reality only through the process of ‘primordial repression’: what we experience as ‘reality’ constituted itself through the foreclosure of some traumatic X which remains the impossible-real kernel around which symbolization turns” (Žižek, 1997, pp. 94-95). What sets the rhetorical drama in motion is the very thing that evades symbolization. Namely, the Real as the repressed content “sets the dynamism that pertains to the human condition in motion” since “some traumatic X eludes every symbolization. ‘Trauma’ is that kernel of the Same which returns again and again, disrupting any symbolic identity” (Žižek, 1997, p. 95). The “traumatic X” may be conceived in Burkeian terms as a “recalcitrant” factor for the rupturing of a structure of language that calls into question the motivation for symbolic action in the first place. In terms of a BurkeLacanian theory, we might say that the recalcitrant slippage in the symbolic is due to the status of the Real as “recalcitrantly inside and outside of language”

(Wright, 1998, p. 99). In this way, we might say that the Symbolic is situated by a founding violence embedded in the traumatic kernel.

The violence and trauma that is repressed from the Symbolic serves as the external presuppositions that play the role of “vanishing mediators.” That is, the violence and trauma is disavowed in order that the symbol system may maintain its consistency and coherence. In other words, as Žižek (2002a) noted, “the gap separating the genesis of a structure from its self-reproduction is unbridgeable, the structure cannot ‘reflect into itself’ the external conditions of its genesis since it is constituted by means of their ‘repression’; of a trans-coding which effaces their external, contingent character” (p. 215). The “trans-coding” of symbols involves the integrating of “some external, contingent traumatic kernel into the subject’s symbolic universe, it is the way to ‘gentrify’ a traumatic experience, to efface its traumatic impact by transforming it into a moment of meaningful totality” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 215). More simply, the process of symbolization is the attempt to build an ideological quilt in order to patch up a situation when things go terribly wrong. Thus, we can accurately situate the Symbolic against an external violent content so that “in the symbolic order ‘time runs backwards’; the ‘symbolic efficiency’ consists in a continuous ‘rewriting of its own past,’ in including past signifying traces in new contexts which retrospectively change their meaning” (Žižek, 2002a, pp. 201-202).

Furthermore, the Symbolic and the repressed content are situated in relation to the Lacanian concept of fantasy. Fantasy is that which both conceals and creates horror. The relationship between fantasy and the horror of the Real that it conceals is ambiguous

at best. Žižek (1997) explained that “fantasy conceals this horror, yet at the same time it creates what it purports to conceal, its ‘repressed’ point of reference” (p. 7). This is because it is a type of non-hermeneutical phenomenology that is located at the intersection between meaning (accessible to hermeneutics) and the symbolic structure (accessible through structural analysis). In other words, fantasy fills up the empty spaces of the symbolic structure and teaches us how to desire (the obscene unwritten rules of the Symbolic). Žižek (1997) articulated this aspect of fantasy:

Fantasy mediates between the formal symbolic structure and the positivity of the objects we encounter in reality—that is to say, it provides a ‘schema’ according to which certain positive objects in reality can function as objects of desire, filling in the empty places opened up by the formal symbolic structure. To put it in somewhat simplified terms: fantasy does not mean that when I desire a strawberry cake and cannot get it in reality, I fantasize about eating it; the problem is, rather: *how do I know that I desire a strawberry cake in the first place? This is what fantasy tells me.* (p. 7)

The role of fantasy is thus the role of telling us how we are to “understand” the Symbolic. Or rather, fantasy is what “stands under” the Symbolic.

Because fantasy “stands under” the Symbolic and fills in its empty spaces, it is traumatic when the fantasy is traversed. The traversal of the fantasy involves the closing of the gap between the explicit symbolic structure and the phantasmic obscene supplement which sustains it. The traversal of the fantasy can perhaps best be exemplified in the empty symbolic gesture that is made to be rejected. There is a gap between the explicit symbolic texture which makes it “certain” that there is a choice and the obscene supplement which precludes taking up the gesture. This is precisely “the gap which separates the public symbolic space in which the subject dwells from the

phantasmatic kernel of his/her being” (Žižek, 1997, p. 30). When the fantasy is traversed, “the gap is closed, the structure of the forced choice is suspended, the closure of being is fully accepted, the hysterical game of ‘I offer you X (the opportunity to leave our community), on condition that you reject it,’ which structures our belonging to community, is over” (Žižek, 1997, p. 30). At this moment, we move beyond desire. Or rather, we move “beyond the fantasy which sustains desire—we enter the strange domain of the closed circular palpitation which finds satisfaction in endlessly repeating the same failed gesture” (Žižek, 1997, p. 30). This is the moment where “nothing remains the same” that marks the beginning of “post-evental” work, or as Žižek (2002a) put in Hegelese, “it is the ‘positing of the presupposition’ which opens the actual work of positing” (pp. lxxxvi-lxxxvii). Beginning the act of positing is the precise work of ideological quilting whereby the positing of “new” meaning to ideographs occurs within ideological clusters.

The positing of an ideological cluster quilt is the response to traversing the fantasy. The ideological cluster quilt is only known through its words/terms (and what disrupts them). For Burke, any kind of symbolic action may analyzed as “dream,” “prayer,” or “chart,” i.e., in “terms of its sub-conscious elements, its communicative aspects, or its efforts to give realistic meaning to a personal or social situation” (Overington, 1977, p. 145). Thus, “the basic tool for analysis is a selected concordance of terms, a list of words with the frequency and context of their occurrence” (Overington, 1997, p. 145). Therefore, the way to find “new” meaning to ideographs is examine the list of words that appear in cluster in the quilt.



The emphasis on the charting of terms allows us to get an idea about the landscape of ideological subjects that continue to function on the plane of ideological cluster quilting once they have made up their mind after the initial moment of positing. Therefore, what is at stake in ideological cluster quilts is the formal characteristics. Ideological subjects “must conceal from themselves the fact that ‘it was possibly chance alone that first determined them in their choice’; they must believe that their decision is well founded, that it will lead to their Goal. As soon as they perceive that the goal is the consistency of the ideological attitude itself, the effect is self-defeating” (Žižek, 2002b, p. 84).<sup>6</sup>

The aim of ideological cluster quilts is the reversal of the ends justifying the means. With ideological cluster quilting, the aim is to justify the means. This revelation is self defeating because it reveals the enjoyment which is at work in ideology. In other words it reveals “that ideology serves only its own purpose, that it does not serve anything—which is precisely the Lacanian definition of jouissance” (Žižek, 2002b, p. 84).

In sum, the rhetorical method for examining ideographic cluster quilting is constituted by the features of Burke’s cluster criticism, McGee’s ideographic criticism, and Lacan’s concept of ideological quilting as situated within the relationship between the Symbolic, Real, and fantasy. The method for analyzing Ideographic Cluster Quilts involves two primary tasks: (1) the Ideographic Cluster Quilt must be gathered from a variety of textual fragments, (2) the major Ideographs must be identified in the Ideographic Cluster Quilt, and (3) the Ideographs and the terms that cluster around the

Ideographs must be analyzed using the critical lexicon advanced in chapters three and four of this dissertation that constitutes a BurkeLacanian theory.

This major connection between Burke and Lacanian scholarship is only one of many methodological connections that may be made. For example, other contributions of Lacanian scholarship may be made to pentadic criticism, the representative anecdote, etc. The point here is to interrogate a specific site of connection for but one BurkeLacanian methodological perspective. Ideographic Cluster Quilting is the method of focus here. The fundamental connection here is that ideology fundamentally attempts to re-solve (through quilting) public dramas. Furthermore, ideology exists by a founding violence that is often repressed in order to sustain the ideology. But we are still in the domain of the theoretical exploration of method. The point of this chapter is to articulate this method to pave the way for the next chapter that will illustrate a criticism of an ideographic cluster quilt. It is necessary, therefore, to interrogate how an example is selected for criticism based on a method of analyzing ideographic cluster quilts. In other words, with the text, context, and fragmentation of American political culture, how are we to create a text by which public ideographic cluster quilts may be analyzed?

### **PSYCHO-CULTURAL TEXTS AND (A/O)BJECT(ION)**

McGee (1990) observed that, “The public’s business is now being done more often via direct mail, television spots, documentaries, mass entertainment, and ‘quotable quotes’ on the evening news than through the more traditional media (broad-sides, pamphlets, books, and public speeches)” (p. 286). This is even more so the case since the proliferation of Internet technologies. Because of this, fragments of texts that show

themselves “do not stand still long enough to analyze. They fly by so quickly that by the time you grasp the problem at stake, you seem to be dealing with yesterday’s news, a puzzle that solved itself by disappearing” (McGee, 1990, p. 287). McGee agreed with Said (1983a, 1983b) that the root of frustrations for critics in studying these situations is “our inclination to treat scraps of social problems and fragments of texts as if they were whole. In [Said’s] vocabulary, the solution is to look for *formations of texts* rather than ‘the text’ as a place to begin analysis” (p. 287).<sup>7</sup> Although McGee (1990) used the term “formation” he wanted to be clear that “we are dealing with fragments, not texts, and that we mean to treat a ‘formation’ as if it were a singular text—only then can we interpret, analyze, and criticize” (p. 287).

The movement away from singular texts and toward textual formations is a significant move when contextualized within Burke’s cluster criticism. Burke conceptualized cluster criticism as a form of literary criticism. Specifically, he sought to analyze the work of a writer in order to chart out the terms that the writer used in their text. In doing so, the critic would be able to analyze the “implicit equations” whereby the author writes about the “kinds of acts and images and personalities and situations [that] go with his notions of heroism, villainy, consolation, despair, etc.” (Burke, 1973, p. 20). Burke’s method of cluster criticism is the very type of criticism that McGee is talking about in terms of the traditional rhetorical model whereby the critic examines a particular speech, broadcast, or book.

The emphasis on the singular text is precisely how the communication studies discipline has employed Burke’s method. For instance, Marston and Rockwell (1991)

analyzed Charlotte Perkins Gilman's, "The Yellow Wallpaper" to find clusters pertaining to rhetorical subversion in feminist literature, and Reid (1990) analyzed Hieronymus Bosch's painting "The Hay-Wain" in order to apply cluster criticism to a visual text. The closest rhetorical scholarship has come to employing cluster criticism in the service of textual "formations" is Foss' (1984) criticism of the Episcopal Church establishment as they argued over the issue of allowing women to be priests in their church, although her study was unclear about how it gathered texts to "represent" the establishment (she may have been implicitly concerned with the formations of fragments, but my focus here seeks to make such a methodological approach explicit). I am not saying here that these studies did not achieve their purpose. I am merely pointing out that they function within the model of traditional rhetorical criticism whereby cluster criticism is used to examine specific speeches, books, pamphlets, etc. rather than formations of fragments that appear amongst a wide variety of proliferating media technologies of information.

The formations of fragments might be thought of in terms of the formation of a cultural psyche. By culture, I mean the implicit fantasy that sustains a symbolic order. McGee (1990) wrote that, "Human beings, the story goes, exist in a matrix of rules, rituals, and conventions that we 'take for granted' by assuming their goodness and truth and accepting the conditions they create as 'the natural order of things'" (p. 280). In other words, while a culture shares rules, rituals, and conventions that exist in the official public discourse, the essence of culture by which we can analyze a cultural psyche is

found in the taken for granted fantasies that sustain and maintain the Symbolic (i.e., the fantasies that sustain the “rules, rituals, and conventions”).

We are thus in a position to examine an important overlap between Burke and Lacanian scholarship on the question of text construction. Namely, texts may be constructed by rooting the formation of fragments in the Lacanian concept of “object petit a” and Kristeva’s “abject” in relation to cultural fantasies. In doing so, we will be able to more fully comprehend the Burkeian concept of scapegoat as a fundamental feature to a rhetoric of motives at the textual formations in a cultural psyche. These central ideas regarding a BurkeLacanian text construction require further breakdown if we are to understand the way rhetorical critics may create texts from fragments that rely on a scapegoat to sustain order in a cultural psyche.

The Burkeian concept of scapegoat is fundamentally different than the primitive usage of the term. The primitive concept of scapegoat refers to the practice in ancient Israel, described in 16 Leviticus 5-29 in the Holy Bible, in which two male goats were chosen by lot. One was sacrificed as a sin-offering and the other was led away into the desert wilderness to a place where it could not wander back to the community after the High Priest of the Temple symbolically transferred the people’s sins onto the animal’s head.

While the primitive concept of the scapegoat involved the community’s public acknowledgement of its own transgressions, Burke’s concept of the scapegoat is the primitive concept *and/or* the failure of a community to make a public acknowledgement of transgressions while instead blaming an other for their misfortunes, faults, and sins.

Carter (1992) explained the Burkeian process that leads to scapegoating: “the linguistic system out of which we construct is not a set of detached propositions but a series of moral commandments, by all of which none can abide. The result is ubiquitous guilt and a search for scapegoats. Like Augustine, all desire to return to a prelinguistic state. All try to blame someone else for their own sins” (p. 11). Burke (1969b) noted that because of the series of moral commandments in symbolic order, people desire “to cleanse themselves by loading the burden of their own iniquities” on a surrogate victim (p. 406). The scapegoat is “the ‘representative’ or ‘vessel’ of certain unwanted evils, the sacrificial animal upon whose back the burden of these evils is ritualistically loaded” (Burke, 1973, pp. 39-40). Burke (1969b) identified a certain “dialectic of the scapegoat” where the “purified identity” is defined in opposition to that of the scapegoat (p. 406). For instance, Burke (1969b) explained that “Criminals either actual or *imaginary* may thus serve as scapegoats in a society that ‘purifies itself’ by ‘moral indignation’ in condemning them, though the ritualistic elements operating here are not usually recognized by the indignant” (p. 406). When faced with a frustrated “moral indignation,” some “may turn in their disgruntlement to a hatred of Jews, foreigners, Negroes, ‘isms,’ etc.” (Burke, 1969b, p. 336).

The idea of a “scapegoat” function as a component of cultural psyches is thus rooted in Freud’s concept of projection in psychoanalytic thought. Lacanian scholarship has helped to articulated this concept by pushing it through the language of fantasy. For instance, Stavrakakis (1999) argued that “every utopian fantasy construction needs a ‘scapegoat’ in order to constitute itself—the Nazi utopian fantasy and the production of

the ‘Jew’ is a good example, especially as pointed out in Žižek’s analysis” (p. 100).<sup>8</sup> According to Stavrakakis (1999), “Every utopian fantasy produces its reverse and calls for its elimination. Put another way, the beatific side of fantasy is coupled in utopian constructions with a horrific side, a paranoid need for a stigmatized scapegoat. The naivety—and also the danger—of utopian structures is revealed when the realization of this fantasy is attempted” (p. 100). When this happens we are brought close to the horrific kernel of the Real: “stigmatization is followed by extermination. This is not an accident. It is inscribed in the structure of utopian constructions; it seems to be the way all fantasy constructions work” (Stavrakakis, 1999, p. 100). Nearly every ideological fantasy, if not all, are “based on the expulsion and repression of violence (this is its beatific side) this is only because it owes its own creation to violence; it is sustained and fed by violence (this is its horrific side)” (Stavrakakis, 1999, pp. 100-101).

The Lacanian name for the object that sustains fantasy is, of course, the *objet petit a*. The *objet petit a* is the “unfathomable X which forever eludes the symbolic grasp, and thus causes the multiplicity of perspectives” (Žižek, 2006, p. 18). The characteristic of the *objet petit a* is what may be described as the troubling aspect in intersubjective relations: “what ‘bothers’ us in the ‘other’ (Jew, Japanese, African, Turk) is that he appears to entertain a privileged relationship to the object—the other either possesses the object-treasure, having snatched it away from us (which is why we don’t have it), or poses a threat to our possession of the object” (Žižek, 2002a, pp. xc-xci). Here we find the difference between subject and object. The subject’s activity is “at its most fundamental, the activity of submitting oneself to the inevitable, the fundamental mode of

the object's passivity, of its passive presence, is that which moves, annoys, disturbs, traumatizes us (subjects): at its most radical the object is that which objects, that which disturbs the smooth running of things" (Žižek, 2006, p. 17).

Kristeva's concept of the "abject" creates a helpful term to contrast with Lacan's *objet petit a*. According to Kristeva (1982), whereas the *objet petit a* allows a subject to coordinate their desires, thus allowing the symbolic order of meaning and intersubjective community to persist, the abject "is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses" (p. 2). Felluga (2007) explained that the abject "is neither object nor subject; the abject is situated, rather, at a place before we entered into the symbolic order" (p. 1). Abjection preserves the existence of "the archaism of pre-objectal relationship, in the immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be" (Kristeva, 1982, p. 10).

Many scholars have used this idea of abjection to understand the nature of oppression in ideological symbolic structures. For instance, Young (1990a) used Kristeva's concept of abjection to understand sexism, homophobia and racism, the repudiation of bodies for sex, sexuality, and/or color as an "expulsion" followed by a "repulsion" that founds and consolidates culturally hegemonic identities along sex/race/sexuality axes of differentiation. Young's (1990a) usage of Kristeva demonstrated how repulsion can consolidate "identities" founded on the instituting of the "Other" or a set of Others through exclusion and domination. Butler (1999) explained that, "What constitutes through division the 'inner' and 'outer' worlds of the subject is a border and boundary tenuously maintained for the purposes of social regulation and



control” (p. 170). Butler (1999) also noted that this border between the “inner” and “outer” is troubled by the “excremental passages in which the inner effectively becomes outer, and this excreting function becomes, as it were, the model by which other forms of identity-differentiation are accomplished. In effect, this is the mode by which Others become shit” (p. 170). Thus, in our own discipline we have scholars such as Gunn (2006a), who write about a communicative style that emphasizes a cleansing “fascistic manner that reflects the machinations of the hygienic apparatus, thereby paradoxically holding it in; what appears to be a gift of gold or good shit (‘give it away’) turns out to be a virtual fist or bad shit (‘this my shit!’)” (p. 91). Gunn’s observation stems from a long line of work from Foucault, Derrida, Butler, and Laclau who have demonstrated that the notion of universality proposed in official political discourses always entails (or is contaminated by, as Laclau has it) a certain particularity, and this is precisely the relation between the abject and the scapegoat as a contaminant that must be “flushed” away.

Because “textual formations” are gathered by the rhetorical critic as the product of a discourse, the textual fragments may be pieced together from the excremental figures of abjection. The figures of abjection are necessarily related to symbolic order as they remind us of a place prior to the creation/entrance into a symbolic order. The abject as Other is also often in a privileged relation to the object *petit a* by possessing the object and/or posing a threat to our possession of it. Thus, the repressed abject Other is simultaneously in a unique place to function in a utopian fantasy as the scapegoat that promises to cleanse us of annoyance/disturbance/trauma in order to guarantee the smooth functioning of symbolic order. What problematizes the cleansing of course, is that the

*objets petit a* are “in a permanent state of displacement and are always elsewhere” (Daly, 2004, p. 4). Again, the reason for displacement is “because [the *objet petit a*] has no positive consistency, that is, because it is just a positivization of a void—of a discontinuity opened in reality by the emergence of the signifier” (Laclau, 2002b, p. xiv). Therefore, in doing BurkeLacanian rhetorical criticism, the critic may analyze ideographic cluster quilts by gathering “fragments” of texts that are organized around objects and/or abjects that exist in relation to a symbolic order. In this manner, the rhetorical critic will be able to analyze a text as cultural psyche as they will be required to analyze the structures of fantasy that sustain the symbolic order (i.e., the unspoken presuppositions that constitute culture). In analyzing the text as cultural psyche, the critic will thus gain a more comprehensive view of the cultural make-up of rhetorical dramas. So now we are ready to contextually enunciate the terms of ideographic cluster quilting by analyzing the drama surrounding the figure of the “illegal immigrant.”

In sum, the rhetorical criticism of Ideographic Cluster Quilts requires the examination of textual fragments that appear in a cultural psyche. In order to create a text to comprise a cultural psyche, the rhetorical critic may develop fragments from multiple sites of discourse that surround figures of (a/o)bject(ion). Once the fragments of discourse are gathered, the rhetorical critic examines the quilting points that hold together the quilt of discourse. Finally, the BurkeLacanian critic is able to use the terms in its critical toolbox in order to analyze the clusters of terms that surround the major quilting points in the cultural psyche. Breaking the BurkeLacanian method of Ideographic Cluster Quilting down further, we are able to identify four fundamental steps that the rhetorical

critic should take: (1) the critic should “survey the hills and valleys” of a multiplicity of texts and/or use their own contingent experiences in the world to identify a figure of abjection, (2) the critic should make a case why the figure of abjection shares the characteristics of an abject as a figure that is in excess of ideology, (3) the critic should gather textual fragments from a multiplicity of texts that reject the figure of abjection, (4) the critic should put together the Ideographic Cluster Quilt of the cultural psyche by identifying the major Ideographs, and analyzing both the Ideographs and the terms that cluster around the Ideographs by using the critical lexicon advanced in chapters three and four of this dissertation that constitutes a BurkeLacanian theory. The method of Ideographic Cluster Quilting heavily privileges the figure of the abject as the core of ideological formations that appear in textual fragments. This privileging of the abject is of central importance since the abject is a consistent feature in all ideological formations. In order to demonstrate this method, the next chapter will analyze the cultural psyche that is constituted by the “illegal immigrant” as a figure of abjection at the core of an Ideographic Cluster Quilt.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

<sup>1</sup> There are other BurkeLacanian methods that may be developed but this dissertation will hone in on one method in order to provide an example for how such BurkeLacanian theory may be employed in the service of rhetorical criticism.

<sup>2</sup> The “taken for granted” presuppositions of any discourse are powerful in the sense that they are most often, if not always, the essence of culture. McGee argued that the definition of culture is the suppressed premise of the enthymeme. In this sense, the unspoken presuppositions are powerful as the glue that holds together various cultures.

<sup>3</sup> The BurkeLacanian theory may also be used for other types of rhetorical criticism, but the focus in this dissertation is on ideological rhetorical criticism.

<sup>4</sup> Here, I am restricting the range of relevance for Burke by focusing on just one of his methodological tools. There is no doubt that Burke does a lot more than just associational cluster analysis. The focus here, however, is on the articulation of associational cluster analysis when run through a BurkeLacanian theorization. Certainly, there are other Burkeian methods that may be run through a BurkeLacanian theorization (pentadic, the examination of terministic screens, strategies of identification, etc.).

<sup>5</sup> I do not find it useful to speak of a public drama as a binary to private drama. Rather, public drama and “division” is the individual relation to public drama. Or, to put in other terms, the “private” drama is not altogether separate, but may be thought of as the “contingent” encounters that structure a relation to/with a public ideology.

<sup>6</sup> And we can also draw another interesting parallel between Lacanian scholarship and Burke's pentad. Burke later said that he would have turned the pentad into a hexad with attitude being the sixth element. The consistency of an "ideological attitude" is thus an integral part to the drama at the heart of ideology.

<sup>7</sup> As I later note, Brummett's (2004) formulation of "rhetorical homologies" also looks at formations of texts rather than "the text."

<sup>8</sup> For instance, see Žižek, Slavoj. (2001). Did Somebody Say Totalitarianism?. New York: Verso.

## **Chapter Six**

### **An Application of Ideographic Cluster Quilting**

#### **THE “ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT” AS A FIGURE OF ABJECTION**

The first two steps in the BurkeLacanian method of Ideographic Cluster Quilting involve the identification of a figure of abjection, and the making of a case for why the figure of abjection shares the characteristics of an abject as a figure that is in excess of ideology. Therefore, in this first section, I identify the figure of the “illegal immigrant” as a figure of abjection, and make a case to establish that the “illegal immigrant” is an excessive figure of ideology. The case for the “illegal immigrant” as a figure of abjection is rooted in the existence of a distinct ideology that attempts, sometimes successfully, to purge the “illegal immigrant” from the United States.

The case for the “illegal immigrant” as a figure of abjection in the United States (and most everywhere else) includes many symptoms. For instance, the U.S.-Mexico border is a landscape of pain, suffering, and death. Along this border, “Mexicana/os and Chicana/os are often suspected or constructed as forever foreign” due to a “history of Mexican Repatriation” (Calafell, 2006, p. 10). According to Calafell (2006) between 1929 and 1936, at least 600,000 Mexican nationals and their children were moved to Mexico including many people born in the United States. A little more than a decade later, Operation Wetback would continue to target Mexicans. In 1954, the U.S. and INS rounded up thousands of undocumented workers and deported them to Mexico (Calafell, 2006). This process has extended into contemporary struggles to maintain the border

between “American” and “Other” through such programs as Operation Gatekeeper, Operation Last Call, Operation Blockade, Operation Rio Grande, and Operation Hold the Line.

Before being deported, the “illegal immigrant” is held at detention facilities. Those held at detention centers, for an average of one year, are often subject to such horrifying acts as unsanitary conditions, beatings by guards, strip searches, being locked in bathrooms for hours at a time, guards who threaten to deport them if they do not agree to sex, solitary confinement, being forced by guards to beg for forgiveness, separation of children from parents, undercooked food, medical neglect, food shortages, sexual assault, dog attacks, being awakened by 10 to 20 guards with four to six unmuzzled barking dogs just inches away from their faces, and locked inside of cars in the middle of the heat of day in a practice called “nigger roasting” (Klein, 1990; McNamara, 2007; Hsu, 2007; Hong, 2006; Bernstein, 2006; McSweeney, 2004). If the “illegal immigrant” is deported, they are often thrust into volatile conditions such as being dropped off in front of Somali soldiers driving trucks with 50 caliber machine guns mounted on the roofs and left to fend for themselves, they face death, rape, genital mutilation, “honor killings,” domestic violence, and being sold into sex trafficking (McSweeney, 2004; Hing, 2007; Lawyers, 2007).

Whether or not the “illegal immigrant” ends up in a detention facility and/or being deported, they face horrific conditions in their attempt to cross U.S. borders. If they come by water, they often drown, are crammed into small boats, suffer dehydration out at sea, and are deprived of food (Adams, 2001). If on land, the “illegal immigrant” usually

crosses in remote areas walking many miles before finally reaching populated areas and transportation routes. They also face the constant threat of death due to the ruggedness of the terrains as they tend to be barren deserts and/or mountains that force them to face freezing temperatures at night and torrid weather during the day (Inda, 2006). The danger is so great that border-related deaths have become routine events and the U.S.-Mexico border has become a landscape of death (Eschbach et al. 1999; Cornelius, 2001; Nevins, 2002). Because of this danger, many illegal immigrants choose to take their chances with professional smugglers (Andreas, 2000). Such a choice brings with it the risk of child abuse, abandonment, death, physical assault, sexual assault, starvation, dehydration, verbal abuse, sleeping in overcrowded spaces, selling of children for adoption, and being sold into sex trafficking (Tayler, 2002).

If the “illegal immigrant” makes it to the United States, they face poor working conditions and the constant fear of deportation. They are forced into slave-like conditions being sold into sweatshop labor until they can pay back their transportation debts (sometimes as high as \$20,000), crammed into company-owned housing, and forever in debt to their owners for everything they need (Loiacono & Maloff, 2006). The “illegal immigrant” is “caught between being treated as criminals and being able to eat, between resistance and deportation, the illegal refugees are some of the poorest and the most exploited people. . . big farming combines, farm bosses and smugglers who bring them in make money off the ‘wetbacks’ labor—they don’t have to pay federal minimum wages, or ensure adequate housing or sanitary conditions” (Anzaldúa, 1999). Illegal immigrant women and girls are at great risk of being sold into prostitution rings for the price of less



than a toaster, the girls/women are held captive, permanently in debt to their owners, and even when a girl/woman escapes cannot return to her village to dishonor her family and thus turn to selling their own bodies, working as maids in hotels and/or households for as little as \$15 per week, or work in the garment sweatshops (Loiacono & Maloff, 2006; Anzaldúa, 1999). Even President Bush has stated, “The system we have in place has caused people to rely upon smugglers and forgers in order to do the work Americans aren’t doing. It is a system that frankly leads to inhumane treatment of people” (qtd. in McNamara, 2007).

The “illegal immigrant” thus functions as an abject to the current political order. Daly (2004) wrote about Žižek’s work that “the abject can become doubly victimized: first by a global capitalist order that actively excludes them; and, second, by an aseptic politically correct ‘inclusivism’ that renders them invisible inside its postmodern forest; its tyranny of differences” (p. 14). In terms of the “illegal immigrant,” I would argue that the abject is doubly victimized: first by a global capitalist order that actively excludes them and forces them into servitude, and second by the fear instilled in the immigrant if they attempt to make themselves visible (while it also may be true that “leveling the political terrain where all groups are taken to suffer equally” also makes the abject invisible). The point here is that one should identify with the abject to ascertain the truth of the official public discourse. Žižek (2004a) provided the following example:

For example, Jews were definitely a minority in Germany in the late 1930s—their position was partial. But you cannot say that Nazis were telling one story and Jews were simply telling another. You cannot say that the only sin of the Nazis was that they simply repressed the other story; it’s not strong enough. The point is that the Jews were in a position to articulate the truth of the entire situation. In

order to know what Nazi Germany was at its most essential, you shouldn't balance all discourses; you should identify with the excluded abject. (p. 143)

The problem with identifying with the stories of the “illegal immigrant” is that their stories are very limited. All that we have are stories from a few brave illegal immigrants that have spent time in American detention facilities (Dow, 2004), when news reporters are able to report about the deaths of immigrants in transit and in the workplace, and from those that were here illegally and have been lucky enough to be granted citizenship.

The idea of identifying with the abject in the BurkeLacanian analysis of an Ideographic Cluster Quilt is roughly parallel to the theory of standpoint epistemology. In contrasting standpoint epistemology to a Lacanian perspective, Cloud (2006) defined “reality as the site of lived experience, the place where the embodied experience of labor generates contradictions with regard to knowledge and consciousness. In capitalism, the division of society into classes and the divergent experiences of members of those classes are real. This definition of the real is standpoint-based, resting on fundamental and divergent interests in a particular society” (p. 331). The BurkeLacanian approach is not strictly standpoint-based in the sense of studying the stories/narratives of the abject. Rather, the influence of standpoint theory is found in the way that the rhetorical criticism of Ideographic Cluster Quilts rests on the ability to study the ideological fragments of a cultural psyche that create the very conditions of abjection. In other words, from a BurkeLacanian methodological perspective, the “interests” in a particular cultural psyche are to repress the figures of excess. Within the context of the “illegal immigrant” the

cultural psyche is “interested” in repressing the “illegal immigrant” in order to sustain its ideology.

In one of the final scenes of the film Dirty Pretty Things (2002), “legitimate” London meets its “constitutive outside”: an illegal immigrant from Nigeria, a Turkish asylum seeker and a black prostitute. “How come I’ve never seen you before?” asks a “native” Briton when facing this “alien” crowd that has gathered to meet him at an underground hotel car park. “We are the people you never see. We’re the ones who drive your cabs, clean your rooms and suck your cocks,” replies the Nigerian immigrant (Zylinska, 2004, p. 523). The “illegal immigrant” is the person the “official” American never sees. It’s not like you regularly hear the “illegal immigrant” speaking on CNN news broadcasts. Thus, all that we have are a relatively few number of “symptoms.” This idea corresponds with the idea that we become conscious of the existence of a cultural unconscious at the point when something(s) go(es) terribly wrong. Having established the first step for the formulation of an Ideographic Cluster Quilt by making a case for the figure of the “illegal immigrant” as a figure of abjection, we can now proceed with the identification of textual fragments that cluster around major ideographs in Ideographic Cluster Quilt. In examining the textual formations surrounding the figure of the “illegal immigrant,” I have been able to identify the following terminology that holds together and constitutes this Ideographic Cluster Quilt in the cultural psyche. Aside from the mere construction of the text as Ideographic Cluster Quilt, we can use BurkeLacanian terminology to criticize the “disturbing side” of the quilt.<sup>1</sup>

## THE “ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT” IDEOGRAPHIC CLUSTER QUILT

### The “un-American”

There is nothing more (un)American than the “illegal immigrant.” The concept of “citizen” is the primary ideograph here. Burke’s concept of the negative reminds us that in order for there to be a concept of “American,” there must be concept of “un-American” that is the undesirable underbelly of the signifier. The concept of the “legal” immigrant is held in opposition to the “illegal” immigrant in the cultural psyche. For instance, Albert Rodriguez, the founder of You Don’t Speak For Me, which is a group of Latinos opposed to illegal immigration, said “we are not against legal immigration, we are against illegal aliens from all over the world” (qtd. in Sifuentes, 2007). Similarly on the United States Citizens for Immigration Law Enforcement (2007) website, they make sure to clarify, “We are not against legal immigration. The borders must be closed to illegal immigration in order to maintain regulated, orderly immigration.” “Citizenship” and “legal immigration” are the terms that are clustered in association to the control over the border as a “regulated” and “orderly” process. The concepts of citizenship and legal immigration are used here as a placeholder in the symbolic to conceal the founding violence of the Symbolic. Namely, the concepts serve to obfuscate the violence necessary to create and sustain such a concept.

Specifically, the clearest cases of a fantasy construction filling out the void of “origins” are nationalist myths. According to Žižek (2002a), “there is no national identity before its (colonialist, etc.) ‘oppression’; national identity constitutes itself through resistance to its oppression—the fight for national revival is therefore a defense of

something which comes to be only through being experienced as lost or endangered. The nationalist ideology endeavors to elude this vicious circle by constructing a myth of origins” (pp. 213-214).

There are two particular founding myths invoked in the arguments against illegal immigration: the Puritans and Thanksgiving, and the Founding Fathers. In emphasizing “legal immigration,” one writer emphasized that “America has nothing to fear from legal immigration, even at significantly higher levels. Immigration has historically been a source of American strength.” Then the writer made a note based on the Thanksgiving holiday, “That’s a point that even the most xenophobic policymakers may find themselves reminded of this week as they gather to feast on the bounty of our land and to give thanks to God in a tradition that was started by the religious pilgrims who took the first steps toward the creation of America” (“The Immigration,” p. 1). The idea of “legal” immigration tied to the pilgrims’ role in “creating” America paints a fantasmatic picture free from the violence of its Symbolic creation. Namely, Pilgrim Governor William Bradford ordered his militia to conduct a night attack on the sleeping people of a Pequot Indian village in a land grabbing act. To Bradford, a devout Christian, the massacre was imbued with religious meaning: “It was a fearful sight to see them frying in the fire and the streams of blood quenching the same and horrible was the stink and stench thereof. But the victory seemed a sweet sacrifice and [the Massachusetts militiamen] gave praise thereof to God” (qtd. in Katz, 2003). Reverend Increase Mather, Pilgrim spiritual father and still a hero in most U.S. textbooks, asked his congregation to give thanks to God “that on this day we have sent 600 heathen souls to hell” (qtd. in Katz, 2003). We see

here the abject Native American as a way to purify the terrible acts of the pilgrim militia, and the way the violence is covered up through the celebration of the creation of America as a predicate to the notion of a “legal citizen.”

Another myth of origins tied to the notion of the American in the cultural psyche that rejects the “illegal immigrant” is the invocation of “the founding fathers.” For instance, according to the Americans for Immigrant Control Website (2007a), “Our Founding Fathers did not encourage unlimited immigration. George Washington felt that immigration should be limited to ‘useful mechanisms and some particular descriptions of men or professions.’” The group also noted that Thomas Jefferson “was concerned that unrestricted immigration of peoples from lands unacquainted with the principle of representative government might undo the careful work of our Founding Fathers.” This glorification of the work of the “Founding Fathers” serves to stress the “careful work” as opposed to the horrific work that was hardly caring to the abject Native American. Friedenborg (1996) described in detail the horrific tactics of landgrabbing by “the founders” including particular accounts of Benjamin Franklin, Patrick Henry, George Rogers Clark, Ethan Allan, Robert Morris, George Washington, and Thomas Jefferson. For instance, in 1780, General George Rogers Clark burned more than “500 acres of corn as well as every species of edible vegetable” that the Shawnee relied on to eat, he would scalp Native and white captives, and he would continue his campaigns into what are now the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois (Churchill, 1997, p. 149, 185).

To cluster the terms “Founding Fathers” with “careful work” is to use them as sources of authority that are cleansed from the violence intrinsic to the foundation of the

careful work of symbolic order in their founding symbolic document (The Constitution). Žižek (2002a) wrote that “‘At the beginning’ of the law, there is a certain ‘outlaw,’ a certain Real of violence which coincides with the act itself of the establishment of the reign of law: the ultimate truth about the reign of law is that of an usurpation, and classical politico-philosophical thought rests on the disavowal of this violent act of foundation” (p. 204).<sup>2</sup> At its core is an “illegitimate violence” that must be concealed because the secret is “the positive condition of the functioning of law: it functions in so far as its subjects are deceived, in so far as they experience the authority of law as ‘authentic and eternal’ and overlook ‘the truth about the usurpation’” (p. 204).

The appeal to the “Founding Fathers” in this case is a way of granting their legal precedent as the authentic and eternal. The fantasy embedded in this is the fantasy of the social contract that “presupposes in advance what is or should be its result, its final outcome—the presence of individuals who act according to the rules of a civilized rational order” (Žižek, 2002a, p. 205). The forbidden mediator that must vanish for this fantasy to be sustained is the pathological act of violence out of which The Constitution grew—the umbilical cord which links The Constitution (the synchronous legal order) with the Native American. In creating the vanishing mediator of the Native American, the fantasy of the “illegal immigrant” as Un-American (Other) is sustained since it purifies the “Founding Fathers” from the guilt of being illegal immigrants themselves in the American cultural psyche, and by extension allows the American psyche to project what it dislikes about itself onto the “illegal immigrant.”<sup>3</sup>

Aside from the nationalistic discourse occurring at the federal level, there are many people who claim that the “illegal immigrant” should be deported because there are too many of their kind in border-states. For instance, the California Coalition for Immigrant Reform (2007) created billboards along major highways on the border between California and surrounding states that read “Welcome to California-The Illegal Immigrant State-Don’t Let This Happen to Your State-Call Toll Free (877) No Illegals.” The billboard statement follows the same logic as the Un-American argument. In 1846, between 75,000 and 100,000 Mexicans were already living in the Southwest when President James Polk initiated the U.S.-Mexican War. During, after, and currently those same people are considered to be the “illegal immigrant” that intruded the states. This is reminiscent of a trip I once took to the Alamo in Texas, and my wife was reading a plaque that talked about the Mexican invaders. “Mexican invaders!?,” she said, “This was Mexico!” Then a guard gave her a really stern look and moved in the direction to intimidate her away. The manifestation of this projection of hatred onto the “illegal immigrant” makes them function as vanishing mediators in the symbolic order. Anzaldúa (1999) noted a similar phenomenon in her experience:

We need you to accept the fact that Chicanos are different, to acknowledge your rejection and negation of us. We need you to own the fact that you looked upon us as less than human, that you stole our lands, our personhood, and our self-respect. We need you to make public restitution, to say that, to compensate for your own sense of defectiveness, you strive for power over us, you erase our history and our experience because it makes you feel guilty—you’d rather forget your brutish acts. To say you’ve split yourself from minority groups, that you disown us, that your dual consciousness splits off parts of yourself, transferring the “negative” parts onto us. . . . To say that you are afraid of us, that to put distance between us, you wear the mask of contempt. Admit that Mexico is your double, that she exists



in the shadow of this country, that we are irrevocably tied to her. Gringo, accept the doppelganger in your psyche. (p. 108)

This passage is telling in that it highlights the split between “American” and “Un-American” as symptomatic of a split in an American cultural psyche that projects the repressed violent foundations of the conscious “America” onto the “illegal immigrant” other.

### **Alien(iz)ation of the “enemy”**

The rhetoric of the “Un-American” is described further in the context of a foreign invasion of “aliens.” For instance, the Missourians Against Illegal Immigration (2007) made a plea that read, “Help Stop the Invasion of Illegal Aliens into Missouri and into the U.S.A.!” The Americans for Legal Immigration (2007a) created a flyer that featured the words “Help STOP Illegal Aliens” in big bold words at the top to draw attention. Fox News published a story Entitled “Illegal Alien Influx May Threaten Security” in order to warn of the threat that “aliens” pose (“Illegal Aliens,” 1997). Dwyer (2006) even called the “illegal immigrant” “Mexican invaders” that are hedging a “desert invasion” (p.1).<sup>4</sup>

The labeling of the “illegal immigrant” as an “alien” is part of a culture that relies on the construction of an enemy. Ono and Sloop (2002) argued:

The production and proliferation of new enemies to blame, to oppose, and to conquer is part of a distinct contemporary culture. Mainstream media discourses, whether fictional or documentary, portray terrorists, welfare mothers, people with AIDS, homeless people, young black men, swarthy international ‘thugs,’ ‘drug kingpins,’ lesbians in the military, militia group members, feminists, and Generation Xers (to name just a few), as threats to the national body. (pp. 35-36)

I would add to this list “the illegal alien.” In contextualizing American Cold War rhetoric within the larger conception of American war narrative, Ivie (1997) wrote that,

“Americans traditionally have exonerated themselves of any guilt for war, hot or cold, by decivilizing the image of their adversaries” (p. 119). Ono and Sloop (2002) argue that a shift has occurred in U.S. rhetoric in the post-Cold War rhetoric where “it is more likely that internal and external enemies are needed to explain existing political, economic, or social problems” and “the other and stereotypes of the other are always shifting” (p. 36).

The context of “the enemy” (i.e., “alien”) in contemporary U.S. rhetoric easily becomes subsumed by way of the subtext of 9/11. This is what leads people like Guillermo Gómez-Pena (2005) to write about 9/11: “There’s been an overnight shift in attitude toward, say brown people. We are no longer hip, sexy, exotic creatures on the global menu. In world according to Bush and his evangelical cowboys, we are all ‘suspicious’” (p. 272).<sup>5</sup> There is little way of knowing the uniqueness claim that Ono and Sloop are making in relation to post-Cold War rhetoric, but what we might be able to conclude from the construction of the “illegal immigrant” as “alien” is that constructing the immigrant as “suspicious” is a necessary constitutive feature of sustaining a “border war” as connected to a larger construction of the “enemy” in the post-9/11 era (though this construction, of course, existed long before 9/11).<sup>6</sup>

The term “invasion” is a popular term clustered around the term “illegal alien.” One of the best examples of this term appears in relation to the construction of the Mexican flag. Patrick Buchanan (1994) described a “sea of Mexican flags” when commenting on a protest in Los Angeles against anti-illegal immigration legislation. Having analyzed the Mexican flag as it appeared in anti-illegal immigration language, Ono and Sloop (2002) explained, “In the discourse, ‘floods’ of people carrying Mexican

flags within the United States are portrayed as the impending—if not already accomplished—invasion of the United States” (p. 53).

The idea of “invasion” is particularly interesting when placed in the context of the relationship between the term “illegal alien” and narratives about outer space “alien” invasions. In her study of alien abduction narratives, Dean (1997) noted that, “In abduction, the alien takes away our agency, and the sense of security and certainty upon which our agency was predicated. The theft of agency is manifest not just in the power of the alien to paralyze us and abduct us at will but also in its technological superiority and pernicious breeding project” (§ 62). While the “paralysis” part of the abduction narrative will be discussed in the economy section of this chapter and the “abduction” part in the criminal section, I will focus here on the part of the alien abduction narrative that pertains to the alien’s “technological superiority” and “pernicious breeding project.”

The fear of losing America’s technological edge over the “alien invaders” is manifest in the context of the war on terrorism, a “suspicious” China, and a fear of the “alien” from “planet Canada.”<sup>7</sup> Within the context of the war on terrorism, the arguments assume that the “illegal immigrant” is a member of a terrorist organization. For instance, Americans for Legal Immigration (2007b) posted a warning from the F.B.I. about “special interest aliens” with “ties to al-Qaeda” that have “crossed into the United States from Mexico, using false identities.”<sup>8</sup> Suspecting a world takeover by “planet China,” the same group posted an article about illegal Chinese immigrants being “charged with stealing vital U.S. military secrets” (Americans for Legal Immigration, 2007c).

In terms of the “pernicious breeding project” there are popular arguments against a “race-mixed” nation. Owens (1999) argued, “Ethnic and racial identity—and the urge to preserve it—have endured throughout history as the central fact of human nature and among the most powerful forces on Earth. . . . Nothing ranks as more surely Euro-white suicide than whites’ tolerance of non-white immigration.” This idea both equates the “alien” as brown and as a threat due to a “chaotic collection of tribal breeds” that result from illegal alien invasion (Owens, 1999). The idea of the “illegal alien invasion” serves to perpetuate a fear of losing United States’ hegemony over the world.

The hegemonic nationalistic fantasy is one that is sustained through the belief in an “alien nation.” According to Dean (1997), “The alien is always foreign, an other. An alien nation would be a nation of foreigners, of those always outside the nation. An alien nation is not just without nationalism; it is without nationality. It is a non-nation, an anti-nation” (§45). The conflation of the “illegal immigrant” with “illegal alien” reinforces the idea that the American nation is the greatest nation in the world—that around the world there are inferior beings that the U.S. should defend against. Supporting the conflation is the perception that the “motive” of the “alien” is to “steal” global hegemony that stands in for the cultural psyche’s *objet petit a*.<sup>9</sup> The conflation of the “illegal immigrant” with the illegal “alien” is particularly significant when placed in the context of U.S. hegemony and nation building since the idea of an inferior “alien” helps to reinforce the U.S. cultural psyche’s narcissistic belief in building nations (nation-building) in the image of the U.S.

The paradox, of course, occurs when the fantasy of constructing a nation in the image of the U.S. conflicts with the fantasy of the U.S. that is sustained by global hegemony (that stands in for the *objet petit a*).<sup>10</sup> In other words, if the U.S. were to realize its fantasy of nation-building in its own image, then they would risk losing global hegemony that assumes the form of *objet petit a* which would result in the traversal of the fantasy and an encounter with the Lacanian Real.<sup>11</sup> Dean (1997) explained the nature of alien abduction rhetoric:

The aliens steal our security, our ability to tell friend from enemy. They take away our capacity to establish borders, boundaries. Of course, deep down these borders have always been illusions. Some things never really fit in. So, while it is often thought that the alien is that which is completely other, the abduction discourse exposes the alien as that which reminds us that nothing is completely other (and everything is somewhat other), that the very border between like and unlike is illusory. (¶63)

In this way, the fantasy construction of the “illegal immigrant” as “illegal alien” serves to protect against the inherent lack of security at the heart of political ontology. When forced to encounter the full scope and nature of the “illegal immigrant,” the work of ideological quilting around the nature of “American” as ideograph/quilting point begins. If such quilting becomes impossible, then repression of the full scope and nature of the “illegal immigrant” becomes possible since being “un-American” is just too unbearable to handle. If/when this happens, repression in the psyche turns to repression in the real and violence is inflicted on the figures of “the alien” as is the case with status quo violence against the “illegal immigrant” in the name of “America.”

## **The “criminal”**

A further part of the ideological cluster quilt is the construction of the “illegal immigrant” as “criminal.” The Immigration’s Human Cost (2007) organization took up the task of compiling a list of numerous crime victims of “criminal illegal aliens.” On their website, they collect a host of news stories to construct the “illegal immigrant” as a drug dealer, murderer, terrorizing sniper, gang member, identity thief, drunk driver, reckless driver, public drunk, kidnapper, vehicular man slaughterer, cop killer, child internet seducer, child molester, bank robber, terrorist, violent assaulter, rapist, drug addict, car thief, illegal firearms distributor, horse killer, carjacker, hate criminal, child abuser, and uninsured driver.<sup>12</sup> The Federation for American Immigration Reform (2007) made a keen observation by pointing out the tautological claim that “illegal immigration is a crime” (because it is illegal). Bruce (2005) blames the “illegal immigrant” for other crimes in the U.S. by citizens because “police departments in virtually every major city (and not so major ones) spend their time responding to crime by illegal aliens, looking for the illegal alien culprits, arresting illegal aliens (when their local laws allow them to), processing them through the system” which means that “more officers, more departments, are stretched to the limit, by people who shouldn’t be here in the first place” (p. 1). The argument that the “illegal immigrant” works illegally and thus steal jobs will be addressed later in this essay regarding arguments about the economy.

The conceptualization of the “illegal immigrant” as a criminal serves to maintain the consistency of the “law abiding” identity by condemning them. The “illegal immigrant” and criminality are so closely connected rhetorically that the slippage from

immigrant to criminal seems almost natural (Flores, 2003; Ono & Sloop, 2002; Santa Ana, 1999). The idea of establishing a positive identity in relation to the criminal other is consistent with the idea of scapegoating in Burke's theory. Burke (1969b) wrote that, "[the] Criminal either actual or imaginary may thus serve as scapegoats in a society that 'purifies itself' by 'moral indignation' in condemning them, though the ritualistic elements operating here are not usually recognized by the indignant" (p. 406). One of the ways the moral indignation is able to function is by purifying constructions of whiteness by projecting a fantasy of a racialized criminal other that haunts the stability of "civil" life. This fantasy is manifest in reality through the detaining of anyone suspected of being an illegal immigrant, subjecting these people to the conditions of the immigrant detention facilities, as well as racial profiling and police brutality (Noble, 1996; Hong, 2007; Refugees Against Racial Profiling, 2007).

Burke also wrote that the construction of the criminal shapes our view of reality and motives when it comes to justice. Burke wrote that that we might approach a criminal "from the vocabulary of sufficient grace, whereby we look upon his transgressions as a deliberate choice of 'evil' where he might as well have chosen 'good,' so that we make our prison justice 'retributive.'" (qtd. in Heath, 1986, p. 86). The treatment of the criminal would be different "if we approach him from the vocabulary of determinism, whereby his transgressions become 'symptomatic' and justice becomes rather a matter of prophylaxis and reclamation. Here we see the destiny of thousands dependent upon a mere shift of terminology" (qtd. Heath, 1986, p. 86). Since the anti-illegal immigrant language here demonstrates the crime problem as fundamentally the fault of the "illegal

immigrant,” the notion of justice becomes preventative and restitutive. In other words, the anti-illegal immigrant language seeks a return to order by “restoring” the U.S. through deportation (purging) and preventing the “illegal immigrant” from traveling into the U.S. in the first place.<sup>13</sup>

This strategy brings us back to the excremental function of symbolic order. Namely, the “illegal immigrant” is a dirty criminal that must be purged (deported) and placed at a distance out of sight (detention facility, prison facility, back to nation of origin) so that “order” may be restored. The fantasy embedded in this construction of order is sustained by the dehumanization of the “illegal immigrant.” The construction of illegal immigrant crime as something that could have been prevented if they were not here rests on the assumption that the “illegal immigrant” is criminal in nature (keeping the beasts away means they will not hurt us) and/or that the “illegal immigrant” is filled with hatred against U.S. citizens even though they may not be criminals in their nation of origin. Both of these ideas are supported by a fantasy that regulates bodies that matter (and bodies that do not matter) that are at the heart of biopolitical control.<sup>14</sup>

If the “illegal immigrant” is criminal in nature in the fantasy, then the ethical injunction of the fantasy is to say, “I know that the illegal immigrant is a criminal which is why we need to keep them out of our country *so that they can commit their crimes against other people!*” The later part of this statement qualifies what bodies matter and what bodies do not matter. The bodies that matter are those that are “legal,” and those that do not are the “illegal immigrant criminal” and victims of the criminal outside of the U.S. These lives simply do not matter as much as “ours.” This is how the U.S. ideology



relegates the “criminal illegal immigrant” and their victims outside the U.S. as bare life. What this logic demonstrates is the violent foundations of the scapegoating function in U.S. ideological order. The U.S. ideology opposed to the “illegal immigrant” fantasizes about sacrificing anyone and everyone in order to sustain its conception of order through this scapegoating function that relegates people to bare life (deprived of rights).<sup>15</sup>

If the “illegal immigrant” criminal is filled with hatred against the U.S. citizen in the fantasy, then it includes the fantasy of a border “war” in order to prevent U.S. citizens from being attacked. This fantasy manifests itself in the treatment of the “illegal immigrant” as an enemy combatant. The construction of the “illegal immigrant” as enemy enables the border war fantasy to conflate the state of peace with the state of emergency. This conflation of the state of peace with the state of emergency is a fundamental condition that contributes to the horrific treatment of the “illegal immigrant” as a “necessary evil.”

### **Economic deterioration**

Amongst the claims in the cultural psyche opposed to the “illegal immigrant,” the claim regarding the “illegal immigrant” as a detriment to the economy is one of the central concerns. Numbers USA (2007) wrote a statement accusing the “illegal immigrant” of wage thievery by stating, “They break the law to steal jobs to which they are not entitled and in the process depress wages of millions of other American workers” (p. 1). Another website clarified that “they” are “not immigrants, but illegal aliens” that “are stealing our jobs. They are and have been by the 10’s of millions” (“Are Immigrants, 2007, p.1). In a more sophisticated argument about the “illegal immigrant’s” impact on

the economy, the Colorado Alliance for Immigration Reform (2007) used Federation for American Immigration Reform data to argue that “between 40 and 50 percent of wage-loss among low-skilled Americans is due to the immigration of low-skilled workers. Some native workers lose not just wages but their jobs through immigrant competition. An estimated 1,888,000 American workers are displaced from their jobs every year by immigration” (p. 1). Moreover, The American Resistance (2007) explained that, “Immigration is a net drain on the economy; corporate interests reap the benefits of cheap labor, while taxpayers pay the infrastructural cost” (p. 1). All of these claims focus on fixing the impact of the “illegal immigrant” on the U.S. national economy while fixing the problem of the “corporate interests” is ignored.

These arguments fall in line with alien abduction narrative above in that the “illegal alien” has the ability to “paralyze” the U.S. by destroying its economic power. The rhetorical constructions of economic deterioration occur against the backdrop of globalization. Thus, before we can analyze the rhetorical construction, we need to investigate the “scene” in which this rhetoric takes place.

Robinson (2006) proclaimed, “A spectre is haunting global capitalism—the spectre of a transnational immigrant workers’ uprising” (p. 78). Citing the International Workers’ Day “Great American Boycott 2006/A Day Without an Immigrant,” he reported the economic impact from the single day of boycotts and general strikes:

Agribusiness in the California and Florida heartlands—nearly 100 percent dependent on immigrant labor—came to a standstill, leaving supermarket produce shelves empty for the next several days. In the landscaping industry, nine out of ten workers boycotted work, according to the American Nursery and Landscape Association. The construction industry suffered major disruption. Latino truckers

who move 70 percent of the goods in Los Angeles ports did not work. Care-giver referral agencies in major cities saw a sharp increase in calls from parents who needed last minute nannies or babysitters. In order to avoid a total shutdown of the casino mecca in Las Vegas—highly dependent on immigrant labor—casino owners were forced to set up tables in employee lunch-rooms and hold meetings to allow their workers to circulate petitions in favor of immigrant demands. (p. 79)

The importance of the “illegal immigrant’s” labor is further illustrated by the support of major agro-industrial giants for legislation that protects the undocumented immigrant (Robinson, 2006).

Orozco (2003) collected data for the United Nations on immigration and reported that some 30 million immigrants currently live in the United States with at least 20 million of them coming from Latin America. Of these 20 million, 11-12 million are undocumented. A “significant contributor” to the undocumented population are people immigrating from south and east Asian. Furthermore, he stressed that these are conservative estimates and that the number of undocumented immigrants in the U.S. is undoubtedly much higher. The sheer number of undocumented immigrants may be compared to the level of unemployment in the U.S. in order to determine the importance of the “illegal immigrant” to the U.S. economy. According to the United States Department of Labor (2007) the unemployment rate is 4.5% and the number of unemployed persons is 6.9 million. They also report that this number has not fluctuated more than 0.1% since September 1996. Therefore, if you were to deport every single illegal immigrant from the U.S., there would be roughly 5 million jobs that simply would not be done. This would obviously harm the U.S. economy in terms of production and

growth. This discrepancy is a symptom that ideology is at work since the cultural psyche denies material reality in order to sustain the fantasy of the “illegal immigrant.”

Repressed from this fantasy is also the movement of labor that fills the demands of production across the globe. Robinson (2006) explained the global trend:

Labor-short Middle Eastern countries, for instance, have programs for the importation (and careful control) of labor from throughout south and east Asia and north Africa. The Philippine state has become a veritable labor recruitment agency for the global economy, organizing the export of its citizens to over a hundred countries in Asia, the Middle East, Europe, North America and elsewhere. Greeks migrate to Germany and the U.S., while Albanians migrate to Greece. South Africans move to Australia and England, while Malawians, Mozambicans and Zimbabweans work in South African mines and the service industry. Malaysia imports Indonesian labor, while Thailand imports workers from Laos and Myanmar and, in turn, sends labor to Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, and elsewhere. In Latin America, Costa Rica is a major importer of Nicaraguan labor, Venezuela has historically imported large amounts of Columbian labor, the Southern Cone draws on several million Andean workers and an estimated 500,000 to 800,000 Haitians live in the Dominican Republic, where they cut sugar cane, harvest crops, and work in maquiladoras under the same labor market segmentation, political disenfranchisement and repression that immigrant workers face in the United State and in most labor-importing countries. (p. 82)

The “illegal immigrant” forms a special function in this global “immigrant trade” by being a “super-exploitable labor” pool that exists under precarious conditions (Robinson 2006, p. 82). Having no civil, political, and labor rights of citizens, the employer can also dispose of the “illegal immigrant” if they become unruly and/or unnecessary. In other words, the “illegal immigrant” is the perfect capitalist subject since their labor assumes the value of a commodity that can be bought, sold, exchanged, discarded, and fetishized.

The market cycle of the super-exploitable illegal immigrant labor pool in the United States demonstrates a specific example of the illegal immigrant trade in the context of globalization. Globalization provides the impetus for the cycle of the “illegal

immigrant” trade. The “illegal immigrant” is willing to take the risks involved in migration in order to bring money to their local community. For instance, the Inter-American Development Bank (2006) reported that Latin American workers abroad sent home \$57 billion. According to the bank, these remittances were the top source of foreign exchange for many countries including the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Honduras, and Nicaragua, and the second most important sources for countries such as Belize, Bolivia, Columbia, Ecuador, Paraguay, and Surinam. The bank also recorded \$20 billion sent to Mexico from the U.S. economy which is more than the country’s tourism receipts and surpassed only by oil and maquiladora exports. The remittances from the immigrant labor “allow for family survival at a time of crisis and adjustment, especially for the poorest sectors—safety nets that replace governments and fixed employment in the provision of economic security” (Robinson, 2006, p. 86).

As previously documented, once the “illegal immigrant” makes the decision to seek work that is available in the U.S. they must decide to sneak across the border by themselves or rely on a smuggler to get them over the border—both options risk death (terrain and border violence) and involuntary servitude (smuggler sells into sex trade, etc.). Once the “illegal immigrant” makes it to the U.S. they work for an employer who uses the threat of deportation in order to create a condition that “assures the ability to super-exploit with impunity and to dispose of this labor without consequences should it become necessary” (Robinson, 2006, p. 84). For instance, once an employer finds a particular illegal immigrant unruly, all they have to do is pick up the phone and call the

Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE)<sup>16</sup> to tell them they have an “illegal immigrant” that has presented them with false documents. Even if the “illegal immigrant” is not unruly, the employer may still phone the ICE as a disciplinary mechanism to ensure the productivity of labor. Once this happens, the “illegal immigrant” is placed in a detention facility that is built by private companies such as KBR, a subsidiary of Halliburton (who received a \$385 million contract to build large scale detention centers in case of an “emergency influx” of immigrants) (Robinson, 2006). Once in the detention facilities, they are subject to remain there indefinitely. If released, they are deported to their country of origin, while those “ahead” of them in the cycle fill the jobs that they left behind. In other words, once the “illegal immigrant” is deported, they are re-entered into the super-exploitable labor pool by being able to “illegally immigrate” again to fill the job made available by the detaining of the previous “illegal immigrant.” It is no wonder then that there are many stories of the “illegal immigrant” being deported 10 or 11 times since it merely confirms the minimal number of times the “illegal immigrant” has been through the cycle of the labor trade, as well as the number of “false document” reports that are used as justification for deportation.

Against the backdrop of globalization, the “illegal immigrant” performs the perfect function of the scapegoat that demonstrates the perceived lack of rhetorical agency in the global capitalist order. Namely the global corporation is powerful and dispersed beyond the confines of individual nation-state control. The cultural psyche takes out its aggression on the “illegal immigrant” because of its perceived lack of agency against globalization (and its “illegal immigrant” trade that produces a super-exploitable

labor pool that drives down the “cost” of labor within nation-states) by figuring the “illegal immigrant” as a threat to privileged objects because of their special relation to them (the decline in pay, social services, decline in union’s effectiveness in fighting business exploitation, etc.), and in order to sustain the fantasy that constitutes the subject’s identity (i.e., as “American”).

For example, the Minutemen, an organization whose membership patrols the border with guns while wearing t-shirts with hateful slogans such as “Kill a Mexican Today?,” are composed of a social base that “is drawn from those formerly privileged sectors of the white working class that have been ‘flexibilized’ and displaced by economic restructuring, the deregulation of labor, and global capital flight” (Robinson, 2006, p. 80). When placed against the backdrop of the scene of globalization, it should not be surprising that right-wing organizers, businessmen, and politicians have sponsored the group’s mission in the official discourse to scapegoat the “illegal immigrant” to purify themselves of any guilt and identify with a fetishist reification of the symbolic Real.

The symbolic Real refers to “the anonymous codes and/or structures (vanishing points, space curvature, scientific formulae and so on) that are meaningless in themselves and simply function as the basic ‘texture’ onto which (or out of which) reality is constituted” (Daly, 2004, p. 8).<sup>17</sup> For Žižek (2000b), capital is the symbolic Real and offers the essential backdrop to reality. Žižek (1997) explained that a “tricky ‘fetishistic reification’ is at work when we (mis)perceive the situation as simply involving ‘relations between people,’ and fail to take into account the invisible symbolic structure which

regulates these relations” (p. 101). The background of global capitalism as symbolic Real is the impetus that regulates the “illegal immigrant trade” and thus functions as the invisible symbolic structure that regulates the relations between people (i.e., the relations between the Minutemen and the “illegal immigrant”). In this sense, the “illegal immigrant” is the symptom that makes visible the fetishist illusion at heart in the displacement of blame away from global capitalism as symbolic Real and toward the “illegal immigrant” as the abject of the symbolic Real. Therefore, we might say that the fetishistic illusion is at the heart of a symbolic “identification” between the symbolic Real (capitalist globalization) and the Symbolic in the cultural psyche (that scapegoats the “illegal immigrant”).

By forming a sense of identification between the symbolic Real and the Symbolic, the “illegal immigrant” functions as a metaphoric condensation of the proletariat in global capitalism. According to Žižek (2000b), the idea of metaphoric condensation may begin to function as the place of “politics proper” as “the moment in which a particular demand is not simply part of the negotiation of interests but aims at something more” that globally restructures “the entire social space” (p. 208). The “illegal immigrant” begins to function as a metaphoric condensation when they are argued to be on equal ethical footing with properly “American” workers. If the cultural psyche that scapegoats the “illegal immigrant” comes to identify with the “illegal immigrant,” then there would be a disidentification between the symbolic Real (global capitalism) and the cultural psyche (that scapegoats the “illegal immigrant”). This disidentification would threaten the very



fantasy (of the “illegal immigrant”) that sustains the cultural psyche by confronting the horrific excess of global capitalism.

In other words, to identify with the “illegal immigrant” is to challenge the conception of which bodies matter that is central to the cultural psyche. The challenge is manifest in at least two forms. First, the more obvious form is that the “illegal immigrant” becomes a body that matters in its ontological dimension—the “illegal immigrant” begins at the same starting place as the “American worker.” Second, the families of the “illegal immigrant” become bodies that matter through the acknowledgement of the importance of remittances. The remittances “allow millions of Latin American families to survive by purchasing goods either imported from the world market or produced locally or by transnational capital” (Robinson, 2006, p. 86). To identify with the “illegal immigrant” would thus mean to identify with the beneficiaries of remittances and their bodies would begin to matter.

### **Public services**

In addition to the “illegal immigrant” as a body that does not matter<sup>18</sup> to the cultural psyche in economic terms, the “illegal immigrant” is a body that does not matter in terms of social services. Namely, the “illegal immigrant” is not worthy of social services such as “education,” “health care,” and “welfare.” For instance, Dan Stein, President of the Federation for American Immigration Reform, stated that, “Most Californians, who have seen their taxes increase while public services deteriorate, already know the impact that mass illegal immigration is having on their communities, but even they may be shocked when they learn just how much of drain illegal immigration has

become” (qtd. in Longley, 2004, p. 1). There are numerous other states where such claims are made in the cultural psyche. At the federal level, Wipf and Wipf (2007) wrote that “Illegal immigrants cost the United States billions each year in welfare and healthcare costs, and this is when they are not even eligible for benefits. . . . Immigrants should work to earn a living for at least a few years before they can tap into public services” (p. 1). Paul (2005) argued that, “We must end welfare state subsidies for illegal immigrants. Some illegal immigrants—certainly not all—receive housing subsidies, food stamps, free medical care, and other forms of welfare. This alienates taxpayers and breeds suspicion of immigrants” (p. 1). In terms of the educational mooching, Wooldridge (2005) explained that the “illegal immigrant’s” presence in the U.S. education system “gives us a frightening harvest of illiterate, uneducated, antagonistic and non-invested young people exploding our society with no academic skills. That’s WHY the Third World suffers what it suffers: lack of an educated citizenry” (p. 1). In short, the “illegal immigrant” drains taxpayer money and is responsible for ineffective government programs in the cultural psyche.

These arguments are all symptoms of an animosity toward the “illegal immigrant” who has a privileged relationship to the system of social services. Specifically, it is a symptom of a paternalistic fantasy that positions the state as the barrier to the protection of the subject. For Lacan (1979), “The father is the representative, the incarnation, of a symbolic function which concentrates in itself those things most essential in other cultural structures: namely, the tranquil, or rather, symbolic, enjoyment, culturally determined and established, of the mother’s love, that is to say, of the pole to which the

subject is linked by a bond that is irrefutably natural” (p. 422-423). The symbolic father is a fundamental failure in fulfilling “the symbolic value crystallized in his function” (Lacan, 1979, p. 65). The symbolic father as state and federal institutions fail to provide the subject with “enough” in terms of social services.<sup>19</sup> The cultural psyche has a fundamental fantasy whereby the symbolic father will provide for its protection. When the “illegal immigrant” as that which exists outside the symbolic law of the father gathers even a little bit of attention, the cultural psyche is enraged with jealous resentment. The “illegal immigrant” thus becomes an easy target since they gain attention from the father that prevents the father from full attention to the protection of the subject. In this sense, the “illegal immigrant” objects and upsets the smooth running of things—the symptom that *objet petit a* is present and sustaining the fantasy about the “illegal immigrant.”

The function of the symbolic father in the U.S. is one that guarantees symbolic rights to the “legal” citizen/immigrant. While these symbolic rights have material consequences, the rights are most often abstracted from the material world. Delgado and Stefancic (2001) explained that, “Rights are almost always procedural (for example, to a fair process) rather than substantive (for example, to food, housing, or education). Think how our system applauds affording everyone equality of opportunity, but resists programs that assure equality of results” (p. 23). Since rights are abstracted away from the guarantee of substantive rights, “legal” Americans may easily get upset, not because the “illegal immigrant” receives health care and education benefits, but because the “legal” American is not guaranteed those rights themselves. The desire for the rights becomes problematized when the “illegal immigrant” gains a privileged relationship

to/with services that are more “privileges” than “rights” because the “illegal immigrant” is perceived to be “stealing” something that is not “rightfully” theirs. The things that they have “stolen” are the *objets petit a* expressed in the lack of access to public services.

### **Infectiousness**

Another major signifier in the cultural psyche that clusters with the “illegal immigrant” is “disease.” For instance, according to WorldNetDaily (2005), “the increasing number of illegal aliens coming into the United States is forcing the closure of hospitals, spreading vanquished diseases and threatening to destroy America’s prized health-care system” (p. 1).<sup>20</sup> “Disease” is also used in conjunction with “epidemic” as Gibson (2005) argued: “the illegal immigrants pouring over the U.S.-Mexico border are endangering this country with actual epidemics. Tuberculosis, hepatitis, dengue fever, chagas, and even leprosy are being imported into the U.S. inside the bodies of illegal aliens. . . . And you thought they only carried heroin-filled balloons inside their bodies!” (p. 1). Moreover, the Dark Side of Illegal Immigration (2007) reports that “Illegal aliens are not screened and many are carrying horrific third world diseases that do not belong in the USA. Many of these diseases are highly contagious and will infect citizens that come in contact with an infected illegal alien” (p. 1).<sup>21</sup>

The symptom that enjoyment is a rhetorical factor in these arguments is that the “illegal immigrant” is the container of disease and yet at the same time the cultural psyche does not want the government to try to prevent a further outbreak by providing social services to reduce the number of people infected by diseases. In other words, the rhetoric conflates the “illegal immigrant” with the “disease” that ought to be eliminated.

So not only is the “illegal immigrant” a carrier of disease, but they are a dis-ease in their agent status. To keep the “illegal immigrant” away is the equivalent of keeping the disease away. If the “illegal immigrant” were an acceptable “agent,” and the disease an unacceptable agent, then the solution would not be deportation or restriction, but the treatment of the disease just as a “legal” immigrant would be treated.

The function of infectiousness as a rhetorical trope is to form an identification with the fantasy that exempts the human creature from the world “out there.” Specifically, the threat of infection is that which puts the cultural psyche at dis-ease by reminding it of its own subject-ness to the world around it.<sup>22</sup> Dougherty (2001) explained that the infected body “attests to its susceptibility to total collapse into an ‘outside’ that no longer functions to demarcate the condition of possibility for the ‘inside’” (p. 8). The infection “presents a world where the boundary between the human as a biological entity and what lies outside it is profoundly unstable, so that man as a subject threatens to fall back into the object world” (Dougherty, 2001, p. 8). The contingent encounter with the “contaminated illegal immigrant” presents a mirror image of the subject’s own vulnerability to the natural environment. This mirror image is repulsive since it creates a reflection of what the subject cannot bear about itself—that it is perhaps chance alone that they are not infected with a disease. Since the “illegal immigrant” appears in close relation to the trope of “contamination,” the cultural psyche chooses to keep it at a distance so as to repress the subject’s own vulnerability to a world “out there.”

The “disease” argument also reflects the presence of an *objet petit a* as conceived in Lacan’s later work. In Lacan’s early work, the *objet petit a* is the thing that “counts

only as a stake in the intersubjective struggles for recognition and love” (Žižek, 1997, p. 8). In Lacan’s later work, “the focus shifts to the object that the subject itself ‘is,’ to the *agalma*, secret treasure, which guarantees a minimum of phantasmic consistency to the subject’s being. That is to say: *objet petit a*, as the object of fantasy, is that ‘something in me more than myself’ on account of which I perceive myself as ‘worthy of the Other’s desire’” (Žižek, 1997, p. 8).<sup>23</sup> For the cultural psyche that rejects the “illegal immigrant” on the grounds of disease, the rejection is rooted in “something in it more than itself” that is resistant to disease and allows the cultural psyche to perceive itself as worthy of the Other as “illegal immigrant’s” desire. By extension, this regulates the intersubjective conditions between the cultural psyche and the “illegal immigrant.”

### **Bestialization**

Consistent with the rejection of the “illegal immigrant” as an acceptable agent, the cultural psyche uses language that equates the “illegal immigrant” with being perceptually less than human. For instance, Santa Ana (2002) analyzed articles from the Los Angeles Times over the course of a six year period and found that the dominant metaphor for the “illegal immigrant” was an animal. They were seen as “animals to be lured, pitted, or baited,” as well as “attacked,” “hunted,” and “eaten.” The “illegal immigrant” was also characterized as a “pack animal” (pp. 83-84). Santa Ana (2002) argued that “as frequently and as exclusively as the mapping is used in daily discourse, the dominant ANIMAL metaphor persists as the major productive way to conceptualize immigrants. Its effects are profound” (p. 86). A prime example of this the comment made by California Senator W.A. Craven in a 1993 meeting of the Special Committee on

U.S./Mexico Border Issues: “It seems rather strange that we go out of our way to take care of the rights of these individuals who are perhaps on the lower scale of our humanity” (qtd in Santa Ana, 2002, p. 86). More currently, a popular metaphor for the “illegal immigrant” is “catch and release” implying that the “illegal immigrant” should be managed as Michigan regulated fish in 1952 with a catch and release policy (Castillo, 2007).

The conflation of “illegal immigrants” as something worthy of hunting or something that is non-human is one of the common preconditions for racist separatism. Balibar and Wallerstein (1992) explained that “every theoretical racism draws upon anthropological universals” (p. 56). Within the universals we find “the difference between humanity and animality, the problematic character of which is re-utilized to interpret the conflicts within society and history. . . . Man’s animality, animality within and against man—hence the systematic ‘bestialization’ of individuals and racialized human groups—is thus the means specific to theoretical racism for conceptualizing human historicity” (p. 57). The bestialization is a way of establishing a “hierarchy” regarding the sanctity of some lives (“identified” with the cultural psyche) and not others (“divided” from the cultural psyche).<sup>24</sup> The repression of the Other through the maintenance of bestialization in the symbolic enables the cultural psyche to commit violent atrocities. This idea corresponds with Agamben’s (1998) explanation of the maintenance of a symbolic politics that bestializes life: “until a completely new politics—that is, a politics no longer founded on the *exception* of bare life—is at hand, every theory and every praxis will remain imprisoned and immobile, and the ‘beautiful day’ of life

will be given citizenship only either through blood and death or in the perfect senselessness to which the society of the spectacle condemns it” (p. 11). Thus, the cultural psyche bestializes the “illegal immigrant” in order to purify itself from the desanctification of human being inherent to the ideological fantasy—and by extension to sustain the hierarchy of the cultural psyche over Other-as-beast.

### **Racialization**

While I have covered various forms of racialized language in the discussion of the “illegal immigrant” as abject, alien, criminal, and beast, there are two other types of racism in the language that rejects the “illegal immigrant.” One way racism manifests itself is in overtly racist language. Terms that are overtly racist in the hatred of the “illegal immigrant” are different depending on the race and nation of origin. When referring to anyone from Latin America, such racial terms include “taco nigger,” “border nigger,” “border hopper,” “border bunny,” “wetback,” “river crosser,” “wab,” “ban,” “beaner,” “bean bandit,” “bean burrito,” “beanbag,” “berry picker,” “cherry picker,” “fruit picker,” “orange picker,” “tomato picker,” “amigo,” “dirty sanchez,” “Juan Valdez,” “low rider,” “pepperbelly,” and “spic.” When referring to anyone from Canada, terms include “canyada (as unimportant as someone from Latin America),” “51<sup>st</sup> stater,” “cankee,” “canuck,” and “canucklehead.”<sup>25</sup> When referring to anyone from East and Southeast Asia, terms include “chink,” “buckethead,” “Chinaman,” “chap,” “Bruce Lee,” and “bug-eater.” For every racialized other, there are a host of terms that are invented to refer to the different variety of “illegal immigrant.”



These terms are usually found in passages where argument breaks down and the threat of violence surfaces. The use of racist language thus corresponds to the Lacanian *passage a l'acte*. Žižek (2007) explained that, “every racist and ‘fundamentalist’ violence always and by definition has the character of a violent passage a l'acte, of escaping into a violent act in order to mask/displace a symbolic deadlock” (p. 1).<sup>26</sup> The violence is necessary to maintain the stability of the symbolic order that is under threat. For instance, in some hotly contested discussions about immigration on blogs, conversations usually end not with further argument, but with the threat of violence to sustain the hatred of the “illegal immigrant.” One blogger ended the conversation by writing, “fuck all u dirty ass spics ill kill all u pieces of shit I fuckin hate all u rotten fucks u dont belong here. if your country is o so fuckin great y the fuck are u shit heads here u do nuthin 4 us except make this country look bad and if u got a problem wit racist people mayb I should teach u a lesson I don't think u wanna b fuckin around with a klan member so get the fuck out u stupid ass spics!!!” (Fuckofflady, 2007, p. 1). The passage a l'acte occurs because a “space of discourse is ultimately grounded in a violent imposition of a Master-Signifier which is *stricto sensu* ‘irrational’: it cannot be further grounded in reasons, it is the point at which one can only say that ‘the buck stops here,’ a point at which, in order to stop the endless regress, somebody has to say ‘It is so because I say it is so!’” (Žižek, 2007, p. 1). This is precisely what occurs with the invocation of the law as the end of discussion in a blog post that reads, “don't call me cracker border nigger...i make the laws that ban you. get back in that kitchen [and] make me a chimmitychanga” (Sarc, 2006, p. 1). Aside from the irony that this very passage makes the person a cracker (one that “cracks” the whip),

it demonstrates the place where the “buck stops”—the violent place where the law is created and maintained.

Another way that racism manifests itself in the language is through more subtle racism by opposing cultural norms. This racism occurs in the form of cultural imperialism that may be understood as involving “the universalization of a dominant group’s experience and culture, and its establishment as the norm. . . . The dominant group reinforces its position by bringing the other groups under the measure of its dominant norms” (Young, 1990b, p. 178-181). The most commonly appearing cultural imperialist language regarding the “illegal immigrant” is the advocacy for speaking only the English language. One blogger intertwined the overt racist language with cultural imperialist aspirations by responding to a post that wrote numbers in Spanish: “What the fuck? Back the fuck off, you taco nigger. Listen asshole: stop posting until you hire a personal translator, cause no one understands what you’re saying, you ‘Me no Habla English’ border hopping illegal immigrant. Fuck you” (Dopeman, 2007, p. 1). Language discrimination serves in this manner as a proxy for racial discrimination and becomes inseparable from the opposition to racialized others.

In psychoanalytic terms, the xenophobic racist language is an “echo of the anxiety of the loss of self, of the anxiety of the potential abolition of the border<sup>27</sup> between ‘we’ and ‘them’ (immigrants), of the anxiety of the assimilation to an other, an other that is supposed to be an inferior being” (Bihr, 2006, p. 1). More succinctly, it is an “anxiety of alienation, for if we end up being an immigrant in our own country, ‘at home,’ then this country is not our own anymore, it does not belong to us anymore, it is not our country

anymore” (Bihr, 2006, p. 1). What makes the cultural psyche a “cultural” psyche is the maintenance of a border between conscious and unconscious—a border between that which constitutes the “I” of the cultural psyche and cultural abject “Other.” The maintenance of this border is the enabling function for the cultural imperialism of the cultural psyche. Such border is probably what led Badiou to explain to Žižek in a private conversation that Badiou’s work is a “search for the ‘good terror’” (Žižek, 1997, p. 26). In a more specific way, a “good terror” is one that destabilizes the border to reconstitute the cultural psyche’s subjectivity where “self” and “other” (in the cultural sense) become radically questioned (which is not the case in the “terror” of the Ku Klux Klan that seeks to sustain the border between “self-as-Klan” and other as “racialized other”).<sup>28</sup>

Both the overt and subtle racist language that establish this border are apparent in jokes about the “illegal immigrant.” For instance, one joke particularly directs poor English speaking skills of the “illegal immigrant”:

A US Border Patrol Enforcer catches an illegal immigrant in the bushes just on the US side of the border fence, he pulls him out and says “Sorry, you know the law, you’ve got to go back across the border right now.” The Mexican pleads with them, “No Senior, I must stay in de USA! Please I beg you!” The Border Patrol Agent thinks to himself, I’m going to make it hard for him and says “Ok, I’ll let you stay here if you can use 3 english words in a sentence”... The Mexican man of course agrees. The Border Patrol Agent tells him, “The 3 words are: Green, Pink and Yellow. Now use them in one sentence.” The Mexican man thinks really hard for about 2 minutes, then says, “Hmmm, Ok. The phone, it went Green, Green, Green, I Pink it up and say Yellow?” (“Illegal Immigrant,” 2007, p. 1)

This joke also displays the fantasy about how “kind” the border enforcers are—they merely *tell* them they have to go back rather than the brutal conditions the “illegal immigrant” faces in the detention facilities. Other jokes that are told feed on the cheap

labor of the “illegal immigrant” such as Jay Leno’s exclamation, “It’s terrible! Gas now costs \$3.85 a gallon. You know, it’s cheaper to have illegal immigrants push your car than to fill the tank” (qtd. in Santa Ana, 2006). Then there are the Neo-Nazi jokes such as, “Q: Why do Mexicans (sic) buy Cabbage Patch dolls? A: Because they come with birth certificates” and “Q: Why don’t Mexicans have any Olympic teams? A: Because all the Mexicans who can run, jump, and swim are over here” (National Socialist Movement, 2007, p. 1).

The racist material of these jokes are funny only insofar as there is a shared fantasy in the cultural psyche about the “illegal immigrant.” In Burkeian terms, the shared fantasy is the “attitude” (part of the hexad) that frames the joke. The attitude of the comic frame is a frame of acceptance as “the more or less organized system of meanings by which a thinking [person] gauges the historical situation and adopts a role in relation to it” (Burke, 1984b, p. 5). The targeted race of the joke, however, views it from a grotesque frame as a frame of rejection. Though, Burke (1984b) acknowledged that “‘acceptance’ and ‘rejection’ cannot be sharply differentiated (the ‘acceptance’ of A involving the ‘rejection’ of non-A)” (p. 57). According to Burke (1984b), “Humor specializes in incongruities. . . . The grotesque is the cult of incongruity *without* the laughter. The grotesque is not funny unless you are out of sympathy with it (whereby it serves as unintentional burlesque)” (p. 58). The racist jokes about the “illegal immigrant” are thus grotesque since the targeted of the jokes are without laughter.

The Burkeian concepts of “acceptance” and “rejection” overlap with a Lacanian distinction in comedy between human and inhuman. Zupančič (2006) explained that

“‘man,’ a human being, interests comedy at the very point where the human coincides with the inhuman; where the inhuman ‘falls’ into the human (into a man), where the infinite falls into the finite, where the Essence falls into appearance and the Necessary into the contingent” (p. 191). Because the jokes have a dehumanizing function embedded in the fantasy that makes the joke funny, they fail to be funny to the people portrayed as “inhuman” in the “grotesque” frame of rejection. Thus, we might be reminded of Žižek’s (2001c) assessment of the true measure of love being the ability to insult the other: “when people ask me: ‘How can you be sure that you are not a racist?’ My answer is that there is only one way. If I can exchange insults, brutal jokes, dirty jokes, with a member of a different race and we both know it’s not meant in a racist way” (p. 1).<sup>29</sup> In other words, there must be a shared fantasy by which the racist joke has no real meaning in the world of the symbolic. If the fantasmic dimension is not congruent with each person, the incongruity in the symbolic stings with racist venom.

## **God**

The cultural psyche’s ideology is reinforced by God’s disinterest in the “illegal immigrant.” The “illegal immigrant” is a sinner for disobeying governmental authority. Judeo-Christian scripture is the religion of choice for the cultural psyche as it occupies most of its mental faculties in opposing the “illegal immigrant.” Biblical scripture that the psyche turns to in order to calm its fears of the “illegal immigrant” include Romans 13:1-7, Acts 5:29, Daniel 9:11, Deuteronomy 28:15, 43-47, 1 Peter 2:13-14, Galatians 6:7, and scripture about abortion being immoral.

For example, one person wrote, “Romans 13:1-7 makes it abundantly clear that God expects us to obey the laws of the government. The ONLY exception to this is when a law of the government forces you to disobey a command of God (Acts 5:29). Illegal immigration is the breaking of a governmental law. There is nothing in Scripture that would contradict with obeying immigration laws” (“How Does,” 2007, p. 1). The person continued by writing, “it is a sin, rebellion against God, to illegally immigrate into another country. Romans 13:1-7 also gives the government the authority to punish lawbreakers, whether it be deportation or imprisonment (in the cases of illegal immigration), or more severe penalties for greater crimes” (“How Does,” 2007, p. 1). Another person prayed based on Daniel 9:11, “May we turn from our national sins of idolatry and immorality that the curse of illegal immigration comes to its swift end” (“God Bless,” 2007, p. 1). The same person who led this prayer later read from Deuteronomy 28:15, 43-47 about the “illegal immigrant” curse: “15 ‘But it shall come to pass if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon and overtake you.’” He continued, “43 ‘The alien who is among you shall rise higher and higher above you, and you shall come down lower and lower... he shall be the head, and you shall be the tail’” (“God Bless,” 2007, p. 1). A different person wrote, “Illegal immigrants are violating the Laws of God when they rebel against the governing authority (1 Peter 2:13-14). The governing authority is sowing their own seeds of destruction by tolerating it, and Galatians 6:7 says that it will suffer on Judgment Day the lawlessness that it sowed” (“God Hates,” 2006, p. 1). Minister Colson (2006) even tied

the illegal immigration issue to a problem of morality on the abortion issue: “legalized abortion created a labor shortage, forcing the United States to solicit undocumented workers from other countries to fill jobs that might have otherwise been occupied by the ‘40 million sacrificed since 1973,’ when the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* decision legalized abortion” (qtd. in “Colson Called,” 2006, p. 1).

Previous Burkeian scholarship has demonstrated that “the ‘religion’ argument appears in texts to invoke authority” (Johnson, 2004/2005, p. 7). The church is the “Body and Bride” of Christ and has “divine authority in Christ.” The authority is revealed through the “holy Gospel,” “the Bible,” or “that Holy Scripture” (Foss, 1984, pp. 1-11). Biblical authority is “a theological claim that cannot always be logically demonstrated, but that rests in the conviction that God is uniquely related to the scriptures now. The Bible has authority with Christians because they believe that it is divinely inspired” (Johnson, 2004/2005, p. 7). Christians themselves recognize the authority of the Bible by depending on it for the illumination of the Holy Spirit (Soards, 1995). Burke (1970) explained that, “the statement that God’s Spirit can be said to rest in those whom God has caused to rest in Him, introduces a principle of convertibility which amounts to saying that we interpret things in God’s Spirit when we interpret Biblically.”<sup>30</sup> Burke continued, “since the former ‘word merchant’ has already stated that it is now his office to ‘preach the Word,’ the idea of seeing things in terms of Scripture glides into the area of seeing them in terms of the Church” (p. 158). Thus, the relationship between Bible and Spirit is such that “belief” (i.e., “the spirit”) precedes the interpretation of Biblical Scripture. It is no wonder then, that the cultural psyche may be “moved” by the Holy Spirit to interpret

Biblical Scripture in the opposite way if the “illegal immigrant” were not abject (“Jesus was an illegal immigrant when he fled Egypt,” “Love thy neighbor,” etc.).

The Lacanian supplement to this is the positing of Biblical Scripture around a Void of subjectivity. Žižek (2002a) wrote that, “Not only do both religion and atheism insist on the Void, on the fact that our reality is not ultimate and closed—the experience of this Void is the original *materialist* experience, and religion, unable to endure it, *fills it in* with religious content” (p. xxix). The religious content is filled in after the contingent encounter that opens the space where meaning is difficult, if not impossible, to grasp (the loss of job/economic security, crimes against you or your community, becoming a “foreigner/alien” at home—all of which are easily displaced on the “illegal immigrant” as curse). Religion is thus opposed to materiality. Žižek (2002a) explained, “True materialism, then, consists precisely in accepting the chanciness *without* the implication of the horizon of hidden meaning—the name of this chance is *contingency*” (p. lii). The “belief” in the form of the “Spirit” that Burke mentioned is thus moved and rooted in the response to the materialist encounter with the “illegal immigrant” that is at the core of Christian belief in the cultural psyche.

### **Environmental contaminants**

The “illegal immigrant” is an environmental pollutant in the cultural psyche. They are responsible for the destruction of national wildlife refuge areas that “encompass more than one million acres of desert wilderness and are home to a stunning array of imperiled wildlife including the Sonoran pronghorn, jaguar, desert longhorn sheep, Gila monster, tropical kingbird, and desert tortoise” (“Environmental Damage,” 2006, p. 1). Because of



the “illegal immigrant” and “necessary” border patrol activities, the “illegal immigrant” damages the environment since:

[1] Illegal trails and roads carved by immigrants can destroy sensitive vegetation and wildlife habitat, and affect erosion patterns, [2] The fragile desert soils and plants could take over a century to recover, [3] Vehicles abandoned by illegal immigrants are expensive to remove and towing them causes additional damage, [4] Trash and human waste left behind by illegal immigrants affects soil and water quality, [5] Low level helicopter flights by the Border Patrol disturb wildlife and habitat areas, [6] Off-road vehicle patrols damage sensitive regions vital to local wildlife, [7] U.S. road. light, and fence-building projects disturb wildlife, destroy habitat and shift animal migratory patterns. (“Environmental Damage,” 2006, p. 1)

In addition, “Cleanup crews from various agencies. Volunteer groups and the Tohono O’odham Nation hauled about 250,000 pounds of trash from thousands of acres of federal, state, and private land across Southern Arizona in 2002 to 2005, says the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. But that’s only a fraction of the nearly 25 million pounds of trash thought to be out there” (Davis, 2006). The “illegal immigrant” most often leaves “in a hurry, dumping blankets and other trash. In some areas, trash piles are knee deep. . . . Illegal dumping not only ruins views but threatens the health of people who live or play there; over time, it pollutes the ground and groundwater” (Villa, 2006).

Of course, the privileged rhetorical space here is the pollution on the cultural psyche’s side of the border—namely, the land that “belongs” to the U.S. The placing of blame on the “illegal immigrant” serves to obfuscate the pollution of the environment all over the globe. Instead of constructing the environmental problem as a symptom of the larger environmental problem, it is treated as an isolated environmental problem. This is a case where that which is left unsaid in the cultural psyche is as important, if not more

important, than what is said. Each time that the “illegal immigrant” is mentioned in relation to pollution, the problem is constructed as a localized problem to the environment in the U.S. and/or a problem to justify the deterrence strategies to keep the “illegal immigrant” “away from here.”

I am not making an observation of priority here in the sense that the cultural psyche should be prioritizing the global environment over the local environment. Rather, I am making an exceptionalist claim—the cultural psyche exempts itself from the world environment by putting blinders on larger environmental problems. The problem with this thinking is condensed in the phrase “think globally, act locally” which is a popular mantra amongst Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace activists. This mantra privileges the “Not In My Back Yard” mentality in environmental issues such that action is privileged in “your yard” while you merely give “thought” to the globe. This mentality is perfectly consistent with the dark side of global capitalism that insists on the exportation of disciplined, hierarchical labor, and ecological pollution to Third World locations or invisible ones in the First World. In other words, we should merely “give thought” to the poor labor conditions and environmental conditions in “other” places, but we should insist on “acting” in our local conditions. Thus, the culturally psyche’s repressed content (global capital) is allowed to stay in the Unconscious. If the cultural psyche were in full view of the repressed content, the mantra would be further complicated to move toward an exclamation “act globally, act locally!”<sup>31</sup> This mantra would be unbearable because of the very reduced sense of political agency in the global environment. The cultural psyche is more easily successful in its own sphere than in its larger intersubjective global culture.

## **Overpopulation**

The symbolic construction of the “illegal immigrant” problem as a problem of “overpopulation” is rooted in several of the justifications for refusing the “illegal immigrant” that I have already covered above including the “un-American,” breeding “aliens,” the increase in crime, the economic burden, the stealing of public services, the increases in diseases, and the increase in environmental contamination. The “overpopulation” of the U.S. is “un-American,” not only because illegal immigration is by definition against the law, it is also “un-American” because it is anti-democratic: “Limiting immigration has the overwhelming support of most Americans, regardless of party affiliation or race. . . . 68% of Colorado voters say overpopulation is a major problem in Colorado” (“Americans Have,” 2007, p. 1). The “un-American” justification is also combined with racism (language discrimination), criminality, public services, the economy, diseases, and religion. According to Wooldridge (2003):

Today in the United States, 70 million immigrants later and pouring in at 2.3 million annually—both legal and illegal—our nation shudders from San Francisco to New York and from Chicago to Miami. We rose from 200 million to nearly 300 million in three decades. What was once a benefit to our country is now a full-scale overpopulation and societal crisis. From stem to stern, our English language is under assault and our schools are drowning in ethnic violence, rapes, drugs, and gang warfare. In California, Texas, Florida and Arizona, our hospitals suffer bankruptcies from non-paid services for 350,000 annual ‘anchor babies.’ Ten million illegal immigrants displace jobs from America’s working poor and depress wages for many others. Leprosy, tuberculosis, Chagas Disease, hepatitis and other diseases ‘pour’ into our country within the bodies of illegal immigrants who avoid health screening before coming on board the United States. Even worse, clashing cultures with religions that celebrate ‘female genital mutilation’ and subjugation of women are growing in enclaves around our country. As Lincoln said, “A house divided against itself can not stand.” (p. 1)

One of the ironies in this position is that many countries use over-population rhetoric in order to justify the very “female genital mutilation” that Wooldridge speaks about (Corral & Darcy de Ohveira, 1992). In the era of global capital, the over-population rhetoric serves the function of attempting to spread people out into different areas all over the globe and thus keep the “illegal immigrant” at a distance. If the “illegal immigrant” is out of sight, then they can remain in the mind and outside the realm of necessary action. The rhetoric of overpopulation thus justifies the conservation of the Third and Fourth World order by keeping the already existent bodies at a distance and at the discretion of global capitalism.

### **Pieces of shit and other expletives**

The final cluster of terms in the cultural psyche that rejects the “illegal immigrant” pertains to the usage of expletives in conjunction with describing the “illegal immigrant.” The referring to the “illegal immigrant” as a “piece of shit” is one of the most common expletives to label the “illegal immigrant.” For instance, Killemall (2006) provided a typical economic argument with the “piece of shit” as a supplement to the language of stealing jobs:

I’m an American carpenter that [h]as had my wages totaly (sic) fucked over do (sic) to the fact that these pieces of shit beaners will work for a nickel. . . . HEY AMERICA YOU BETTER START FIGHTING FOR YOUR COUNTRY BEFORE YOU HAVE NOTHING. Also any of you beaners reading this you better hope my government doeant (sic) make it legal to shoot motherfuckers because i (sic) will be the 1<sup>st</sup> to start pulling triggers and believe me i won’t lose 1 nite (sic) sleep over it. (p. 1)

Gunn (2003b) reminded us of Burke’s writing in A Grammar of Motives where he “led to (de)posit a ‘demonic trinity’ of the fundamental principles responsible for the invention

of ‘cloacal ambiguities’ in discourse: ‘the erotic, [the] urinary, and [the] excremental.’ These principles, argued Burke, can be said to organize the any number of tropic innovations in the register of the purely purposive—particularly in terms of mystical speech” (p. 194).

The “excremental” function in discourse is positioned such that “once smell is caught within the logics of capital, like bad speech, it becomes associated with those marginal subjects unwilling or unable to deodorize: the classes, the raced, the ‘shit’ of society” (Gunn, 2003b, p. 198). Thus, it is no surprise given the other symbolic constructions of the “illegal immigrant” that they would qualify as the “shit” of society in both classed (i.e., “work for a nickel”), and racial (i.e., “beaner”) ways. The “illegal immigrant” functions as the necessary waste of the ideographic cluster quilt in a very explicit manner since the “illegal immigrant” is literally labeled a “piece of shit.”

An important observation to be made here is that such excrements are the very basis for what Anzaldúa (1999) described as “La facultad.” La facultad includes “the capacity to see in the surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface. It is an instant ‘sensing,’ a quick perception arrived at without conscious reasoning.” It also includes “an acute awareness mediated by the part of the psyche that does not speak, that communicates in images and symbols which are the faces of feelings, that is, behind which feelings reside/hide.” Anzaldúa (1999) continued by noting, “Those who are pounced on the most have it the strongest—the females, the homosexuals of all races, the darkskinned, the outcast, the persecuted, the marginalized, the foreign” (p. 60). Thus, it is from the perspective of “the pieces of shit”

of the cultural psyche that we gain the capacity to see in surface phenomena the meaning of deeper realities, to see the deep structure below the surface. In other words, it is from the perspective of “the pieces of shit” that we become more astute rhetorical critics.

## **SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS**

In this chapter, I have illustrated that BurkeLacanian criticism is a form of ideological criticism because it situates rhetorical dramas that are constitutive of competing ideologies within the registers of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and Real while creating a critical lexicon for analyzing desire and enjoyment as rhetorical factors. In order to demonstrate this critical method, I advanced the idea of forming textual fragments around figures of (a/o)bjection that may be criticized by mapping the ideographic cluster quilt that forms from the textual fragments. The critical example I examined in this chapter was the figure of the “illegal immigrant” as a figure of abject that is subject to horrific conditions in detention centers, hazardous workplaces, abuse from smugglers, sex trafficking, and a whole host of other atrocities. The cluster ideographic quilt reveals that the cultural psyche believes that the “illegal immigrant” is a “polluting” “diseased” “sinning” “un-American” “criminal” “enemy” “alien” “breeding” “beast” “piece of shit” “(insert racial expletive)” who “free-rides” off the system and is “damaging the economy.” The “illegal immigrant” is an ideograph in the sense that it is a stable term that supplements the nationalistic ideographs such as “American,” “Freedom,” etc. Yet, the “illegal immigrant” is an abject ideograph since it will always be defined as the violation of the symbolic law. Therefore, it is a more stable ideograph in

that its meaning may never change unless other ideographs that it by definition violates undergo a radical re-orientation of meaning.

The organizing feature of the ideographic cluster quilt is the figure of the “illegal immigrant” as an object abject subject. The “illegal immigrant” functions as an *objet petit a* insofar as “it” “moves,” “disturbs,” and “annoys” the cultural psyche’s smooth functioning (by getting in the way of access to money/jobs, social services, and U.S. global hegemony). The “illegal immigrant” functions as abject as the excrement of global capital. The “illegal immigrant” is subject in their human being.

Moreover, there are a few implications that follow from the ideographic cluster quilt that is formed around the figure of the “illegal immigrant.” The first implication is theoretical in its orientation. Namely, the rhetorical criticism of Ideographic Cluster Quilts is able to analyze the power of hegemonic ideology in a cultural psyche. In this chapter, we were able to document the relationship between the ideology that rejects the “illegal immigrant” and the way such a rejection is manifested in the real violence inflicted on illegal immigrant bodies. Thus, the BurkeLacanian method for analyzing Ideographic Cluster Quilts is able to mediate between discursivity and materiality by positing the Imaginary and Symbolic in a dialectical relationship with the Real in a cultural psyche that forms the basis for a rhetorical drama. While influenced by standpoint epistemology, this mediation differs by not directly calling for an identification with the abject but rather calling for the interrogation of the ideology that must attempt to repress the abject in order to sustain itself. In this specific case, the cultural psyche is constituted by the Imaginary and Symbolic construction of the “illegal

immigrant” as a figure of excess since it resists symbolization in the cultural psyche.<sup>32</sup> Inversely, the “illegal immigrant” is “necessarily” a figure of excess within the Ideographic Cluster Quilt in order to sustain meaning in other signifiers that constitute the ideological quilt (i.e., the “illegal immigrant” as “un-American”).

The second implication of this chapter is that the formal characteristics of the fantasy of the “illegal immigrant” appear in other symptoms of a U.S. cultural psyche. Specifically, the fantasy of the “illegal immigrant” is manifested in reality through the horrific conditions the “illegal immigrant” is subjected to. There are numerous symptoms that occur in reality on the physical borders of the U.S. and within U.S. detention facilities including sleep deprivation, solitary confinement for 23 hours per day, thrown outside in the middle of the freezing cold winter, smashed headfirst into walls, stripped naked, physically and psychologically tortured, objects being put up the rectums of the people being searched, racially motivated verbal abuse, killing, routine beatings, forced to crawl through a gauntlet of officers, made to chant, forced to sign confessions, severe twisting of hands, cuffed, arms, and fingers, and other various types of physical, psychological, and sexual abuse (Goodman, 2005; Munnell & Rodriguez, 2004; Berlow, 2004; Wokusch, 2004; Act Against Torture, 2007).

Many of these abuses are even confirmed by the Inspector General at the Justice Department but are left unprosecuted. The fantasy of engaging in such brutal acts is sustained through an “exempted” status from official discourse. Within the U.S., private companies that own detention facilities are “cloaked in the full authority of the United States government, [and] are not subject to the same legal constraints as government



personnel. In a 5-4 vote, the U.S. Supreme Court in 1999 specifically exempted government contractors from a substantial degree of liability in *Malesko v. Correctional Services Corporation*” (Munnell & Rodriguez, 2004). In anticipating the continuation and increase in abuse, Justice Stevens wrote in the minority opinion that “because a private prison corporation’s first loyalty is to its stockholders, rather than the public interest, it is no surprise that cost-cutting measures jeopardizing prisoners’ rights are more likely in private facilities than in public ones” (qtd. in Munnell & Rodriguez, 2004). George W. Bush, in particular, has a history of exempting his administration for responsibility for the horrific treatment of prisoners. As the Governor of Texas, he authorized the execution of Irineo Tristan Montoya, a Mexican illegal immigrant who hadn’t even seen a consular official from his own country (as is required by the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, to which the U.S. was a signatory) (Berlow, 2004). Bush’s explanation was simply, “Texas did not sign the Vienna Convention, so why would we be subject to it?” (qtd. in Wokusch, 2004).

The persistence of exemption in official discourse is what absolves responsibility from public officials. For instance, in a 2002 Department of Defense news conference, Secretary Rumsfeld said, “There are thing (sic) we know that we know. There are known unknowns. That is to say there are things that we now know we don’t know. But there are also unknown unknowns. There are things we don't know we don't know” (p. 1). Žižek (2004b) reminded us that “What he forgot to add was the crucial fourth term: the ‘unknown knowns,’ the things we don’t know that we know—which is precisely, the Freudian unconscious, the ‘knowledge which doesn’t know itself,’ as Lacan used to say”

(p. 1). Žižek (2004b) explained that in Rumsfeld's thought, "the main dangers in the confrontation with Iraq were the 'unknown unknowns,' that is, the threats from Saddam whose nature we cannot even suspect, then the Abu Ghraib scandal shows that the main dangers lie in the 'unknown knowns'—the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices we pretend not to know about, even though they form the background of our public values" (p. 1). The Abu Ghraib scandal and the treatment of the "illegal immigrant" on the borders and in detention facilities thus share a homologous relationship to one another by being disavowed beliefs and obscene practices that occur against the background of the official discourse. This homologous relationship creates the symptom of an obscene enjoyment at the core of the cultural psyche that opposes the "illegal immigrant" in its symbolic and imaginary constructions because the "unknown knowns" in the case of the "illegal immigrant" manifest themselves in a very similar way to the "unknown knowns" in the Abu Ghraib scandal.

We can see this in the homologous relationship between the treatment of the "illegal immigrant" by ICE border patrol agents and detention facility guards, and the way Nazi soldiers carried out the orders of the Nazi Holocaust. I should quickly note that I am not making a comparison of the atrocities, but rather a comparison of the enabling mechanisms to justify the infliction of horror within bureaucratic machines. One grand assumption that underlies all use of homology is "that formal parallels across different domains and occurrences indicate some grand engine of reality or human experience pushing up those similarities, a grand engine worth detecting and studying because it shapes wide ranges of that reality and experience." Another grand assumption is "that

different members of a homological set may be compared with one another so as to enrich one's understanding of any given member" (Brummett, 2006, p. 453). A homology is "a formal semblance. A homology is a pattern found to be ordering significant particulars of different and disparate experiences" (Brummett, 2004, p. 1). While the Nazi Holocaust and the treatment of the "illegal immigrant" are different in the contingent experiences, and disparate in the cultural psyche (Nazi is villain, American is hero), there is nonetheless a formal semblance that the two share.

The homological form that each of the different and disparate experiences share is the imaginary screen and the real of the sadistic jouissance in what they were/are doing. Žižek (1997) explained the imaginary screen and jouissance in relation to the Nazi soldiers:

[T]he fact remains however, that the execution of the Holocaust was treated *by the Nazi apparatus itself* as a kind of obscene dirty secret, not publicly acknowledged, resisting simple and direct translation into the anonymous bureaucratic machine. . . . [Two components of this include]: the *imaginary* screen of satisfactions, myths, and so on, which enable the subjects to maintain a distance towards (and thus to 'neutralize') the horrors they are involved in and the knowledge they have about them (telling themselves that Jews are only being transported to some new Eastern camps; claiming that just a small number of them were actually killed; listening to classical music in the evening and thus convincing themselves that 'after all, we are men of culture, unfortunately forced to do some unpleasant, but necessary things, etc.); and, above all, the *real* of the perverse (sadistic) *jouissance* in what they were doing (torturing, killing, dismembering bodies. . .). It is especially important to bear in mind how the very 'bureaucratization' of the crime was ambiguous in its libidinal impact: on the one hand, it enabled (some of) the participants to neutralize the horror and take it as 'just another job'; on the other, the basic lesson of the perverse ritual also applies here: this 'bureaucratization' was in itself a source of an additional *jouissance* (does it not provide an additional kick if one performs the killing as a complicated administrative-criminal operation? Is it not more satisfying to torture prisoners as part of some orderly procedure—say, the meaningless 'morning exercises' which served only to torment them—didn't it give another 'kick' to the guards'.

satisfaction when they were inflicting pain on their victims not only by directly beating them up but in the guise of an activity officially destined to maintain their health?). . . . One cannot claim that [the Nazi guards] were grey, dispassionate bureaucrats blindly following orders in accordance with the German authoritarian tradition of unconditional obedience: numerous testimonies bear witness to the *excess of enjoyment* the executioners found in their enterprise (see the numerous examples of ‘unnecessary’ supplementary inflicting of pain or humiliation—urinating on an old Jewish lady’s head, etc.). One cannot claim that the executioners were a bunch of crazy fanatics oblivious of even the most elementary moral norms: the very people who carried out the Holocaust were often able to behave honorably in their private or public lives, to engage in a diversified cultural life, to protest against social injustice, and so forth. One cannot claim that they were terrorized into submission, since any refusal to execute an order would be severely punished: before doing any ‘dirty work,’ members of the police unit were regularly asked if they were able to do it, and those who refused were excused without punishment. So. . . the executioners *did have a choice*; they were on average fully responsible, mature, ‘civilized’ Germans. (pp. 55-56)

Thus, the Nazi guards that did the “dirty work” shared the imaginary screen of being “civilized Germans,” while at the same time experiencing a real surplus enjoyment to the official discourse of the German bureaucracy.

The treatment of the “illegal immigrant” on the border and in the immigrant detention facilities is a “dirty secret” in the maintenance of American borders. In treating the “illegal immigrant” in horrific ways, there exists the same imaginary screen of satisfactions, myths, and so on. In terms of the imaginary screen, the subjects that carry out the atrocities are able to maintain a distance toward the horrors they are involved in and the knowledge they have about them (telling themselves that they are *merely* being deported to their country of origin, telling themselves that only a small number of illegal immigrants actually experience violence, and claiming that they are only carrying out some unpleasant, but necessary, things). There is also a very real and sadistically perverse

jouissance in what they were/are doing (torturing, killing, raping, etc.). The “bureaucratization” of the crimes are also ambiguous in their libidinal impact: on the one hand, it enables (some of) the participants to neutralize the horror and take it as “just another job” since, for instance, prison guards at detention centers make between \$12,000 to \$20,000 on average per year (Klein, 1990). On the other hand, the basic lesson of the perverse ritual also applies here: this “bureaucratization” is/was the source of an additional *jouissance* since it provides for the torturing of detainees as part of an “orderly” procedure (such as the meaningless routine of being awakened by attack dogs). One cannot claim that the ICE border patrol, detention center guards, and minutemen who do the “dirty work” are a bunch of crazy fanatics oblivious of even the most elementary moral norms: the very people who carry out the abuses of the “illegal immigrant” behave “honorably” in their private or public lives, they engage in a “diversified” cultural life, and even protest against social injustice in a “democratic” society, and so forth. One cannot claim that they are terrorized into submission, since they have the option of other functions within and without the bureaucratic machine. So the ICE border patrol, detention center guards, and minutemen who do the “dirty work” do have a choice; they are on average fully responsible, mature, “civilized” Americans. It is no wonder, then, that Abu Ghraib and other prison abuse scandals do not come from nowhere.

The third implication to this chapter is that the threat of deporting all illegal immigrants is the “perfect” empty gesture. The “illegal immigrant” serves the function of being able to endlessly fulfill the guilt cycle since they supply an endless supply of

scapegoats within nationalist ideologies and the materiality of global capital. This supply of “illegal immigrants” as scapegoats is endless because of the fundamental impossibility of deporting all illegal immigrants. The impossibility of deporting all illegal immigrants may be explained as partially dependent on whether or not federal and state authorities know where all of the illegal immigrants are.

If state and federal authorities already know where the illegal immigrants are then they would probably have little trouble tracking down the 11-12 million illegal immigrants—this is most likely true since the estimate is based on census data collected by the government itself (Passel, 2006). If there were a concerted effort to deport all illegal immigrants, the governments would need to allocate billions, if not trillions, of dollars in enforcement personnel and technology to physically remove 11-12 million people from the U.S. and block people from traveling across the border. In addition, there would be many corporations that would relocate outside the U.S. to find other welcoming countries with readily exploitable labor populations—a phenomenon that is already happening (i.e., Halliburton’s recent relocation of its headquarters to Dubai). If the government does not know where to find illegal immigrants, then billions more dollars will have to be spent trying to find them. In either case, deporting every illegal immigrant still runs the risk of crippling the economy. If there are roughly 12 million illegal immigrants based on conservative estimates, and there are roughly 7 million unemployed Americans, there are approximately 5 million jobs that would cease to be done. The loss in productivity would undoubtedly damage key sectors such as the agricultural sector.

Not only is the empty gesture impossible on the part of the cultural psyche that wants to “deport them all,” but taking up the empty gesture would mean that the “illegal immigrant” would have to face increased verbal and physical abuse from employers as well as taking a vow of poverty by returning to their nation of origin. So, the perfect empty gesture exists because of two conditions: (1) the U.S. government has their hands tied on the issue of immigration since corporations rely on the “illegal immigrant,” and upsetting the corporation risks upsetting the national economy since the corporation functions in competition between nation-states for their capital investment—while at the same time the “cultural psyche” remains adamant about “protecting the border” and “deporting them all,” and (2) the “illegal immigrant” will not force the issue of taking up the empty gesture because of the fear of increased verbal and physical abuse and the threat of deportation into worse conditions of poverty. To maintain this delicate balance, the U.S. government deports a grand total of approximately 200,000 illegal immigrants per year (approximately 1.7% of all illegal immigrants in the U.S.)—although this number is undoubtedly set to increase with the allocation of increased government money to global corporations such as Corrections Corporation of America and Halliburton.<sup>33</sup> By deporting 200,000 illegal immigrants and building more detention facilities, the scapegoat is both visible and perpetually invisible/“out there” (Munnell & Rodriguez, 2004).<sup>34</sup>

One thing in this picture is clear: the impossible empty gesture demonstrates the perverse treatment of the “illegal immigrant” in the U.S. cultural psyche. A classic example of this occurred in an immigration sweep in New Bedford. Spanish speaking

grandmothers and nursing mothers were rounded up as national security threats as they were stitching safety vests and backpacks for the U.S. military. The government has a multimillion dollar contract with the owners of the factory where hundreds of low-wage earners were led away in shackles. One federal government bureaucracy deports the same undocumented workers whose cheap labor another federal bureaucracy is content to exploit (McNamara, 2007). In other words, one federal bureaucracy comes in and sweeps away illegal immigrants to clear the way for another stream of cheap illegal immigrant workers, meanwhile the swept up immigrants are detained in a corporate owned detention center. Then they are deported. It is a cycle that ensures cheap labor and a necessary scapegoat to absolve the guilt of the government apparatus—the perfect Burkeian guilt cycle sustained by the abject.

The fourth implication to this chapter pertains to the contribution to rhetorical scholarship on illegal immigration. Flores (2003) noted that “Whether invoked directly or indirectly, the figure of the “illegal alien” is hauntingly consistent, as is the quick turn to deportation” (p. 363). What Flores tacitly refers to here is the relationship between the “illegal immigrant” and the idiom of haunting. Gunn (2006b) explained that, “Every haunting can be characterized as a loss, as the recall of an event of losing, and in some sense, as a melancholic inability to let go of the *thing* that is lost (even a sense of a coherent self, which is typically undone in trauma)” (p. 91). He continued by noting that “haunting is an inability to mourn a person or figure, a kind of melancholia that Derrida has suggested keeps us more hospitable. On the other hand, haunting is the mourning of a traumatic event, a coming to terms with some horrible practice or occurrence” (p. 91).



If the figure of the “illegal immigrant” is “hauntingly” consistent, then the “illegal immigrant” is situated within the cultural psyche between two deaths. Gunn (2006b) wrote about the relation between haunting and the two deaths: “In echoes of that fateful moment of our first death (entry into the Symbolic), in living from here to that final, second death, we repress the voice that ceaselessly intones that we can never coincide with ourselves—that we are, in fact, subjects barred from ‘nature’” (p. 109). The “illegal immigrant” is repressed after the first death (the entry into nationalistic Symbolic identity), and “consistently” intones that the cultural psyche can never coincide with itself—it will always be barred from the “nature” that is perpetually outside the borders of the nation-state. The “illegal immigrant” thus has a special status as an ideograph in the cultural psyche—the “illegal immigrant” is more stable in the ideological quilt than other ideographs like “freedom” whose meaning may continually change within the cultural psyche. Ono and Sloop (2002) and Flores (2003) have identified the relationship between the figure of the “illegal immigrant” and the rhetorical construction of nations and borders. This chapter extended on this work by demonstrating that such construction occurs within a cultural psyche and within the dramatistic scene of global capitalism. As far as Flores’ (2003) observation concerning the “quick turn to deportation,” we should not be surprised since the attempt to purge through exorcism is a common response to the haunting of the cultural psyche.<sup>35</sup>

The fifth implication pertains to the relationship between metaphoric condensation and the Burkeian “representative anecdote.” For Lacan, condensation and metaphor are the same process. Lacan identified displacement and condensation as the

two operations of the unconscious by identifying “displacement with metonymy or the syntagmatic pole of language and condensation with metaphor or the paradigmatic pole of language. Displacement works through linguistic contiguity, condensation through substitution” (Rabine, 1987/1988, p. 35).<sup>36</sup> When a metaphoric condensation erupts as a symptom of the unconscious, it “disrupts the unity of the symbolic order and the Oneness of the subject based on it. It frees the difference repressed by metaphor as substitution, since in condensation the two terms of the metaphor alternate with each other in the same signifier, and this makes them both different and the same, both separate and united, both absent and present” (Rabine, 1987/1988, p. 36).

Burke picked drama as the central metaphor for his method “because of his insistence that any method should represent rather than reduce its subject matter. To represent something is to sum up its essence; and the dramatic aspects of what people do and say are the essence of human action” (Brummett, 1984, p. 162). A representative anecdote is “a dramatic form which underlies the content, or the specific vocabulary, of discourse” (Brummett, 1984, pp. 162-163). A metaphoric condensation may thus function as a representative anecdote since a metaphoric condensation has the ability to collapse the symbolic order if it erupts as a symptom of the unconscious. Within the context of the cultural psyche examined in this chapter, the “illegal immigrant” functions as a metaphoric condensation of the global proletariat and a representative anecdote of global capitalism. In other words, in the cultural psyche, the “illegal immigrant” is the epitome of the working class subject and represents the “bottom class” in the era of globalization. The popular protest phrase “No Human Is Illegal!” is thus a phrase that expresses a

solidarity (i.e., Burkeian identification) with the global proletariat—a solidarity that threatens global capitalism and the construction of national borders. This demand is particularly threatening because global capital requires the free movement of commodities along with the establishment of borders to both keep wage slaves physically isolated from each other *and* to pit nationalism against the “illegal immigrant” and the proletariat in different countries.

The final implication has to do with the Lacanian concept of love. The Lacanian version of love is a radical Judeo-Christian love that is the “anxiety-provoking abyss of the Other’s desire” that is to be contrasted with the Buddhist compassion with suffering that refers to “the suffering that we, as humans, share with other animals (this is why, according to the doctrine of reincarnation, a human can be reborn as an animal)” (Žižek, 2002c, p. 116). Freud responded to the injunction “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” in Civilization and its Discontents by writing, “Why should we do it? What good will it do us? But, above all, how shall we achieve it? How can it be possible? My love is something valuable to me which I ought not to throw away without reflection. It imposes duties on me for whose fulfillment I must be ready to make sacrifices. If I love someone, he must deserve it in some way” (p. 748). In Seminar XX, Lacan agreed with Freud’s position in Civilization and its Discontents where Freud (1961) wrote that a person’s “neighbor is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and to kill him” (p. 111). This chapter has

demonstrated that the figure of the “illegal immigrant” as abject in the cultural psyche is the “potential helper or sex object,” and a *threat* to “invade America” that in turn puts the cultural psyche’s very being into question. In this sense, we might conclude that “Love Thy Neighbor!” means “Love the Illegal Immigrant!” or it means nothing at all.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

<sup>1</sup> Remember, the point of a BurkeLacanian rhetorical critique is not merely to learn something new—it is to learn the “disturbing side” of something that we may have known all along.

<sup>2</sup> This idea is related to the rationale for studying the Unconscious in rhetorical theory in Chapter two in the discussion of repressive state apparatuses. The violent foundations of an Ideographic Cluster Quilt may also be found in the discussion of Burke’s concept of “recalcitrance” with the Lacanian Real, as well as the role of the “vanishing mediator” in chapter five. The discussion of the violent foundations of an Ideographic Cluster Quilt in general may also be found in chapter five. Chapter five also talks about the role of violent foundations in utopian constructions—see the discussion on Stavrakakis. Finally, chapter five talks about the relation between Kristeva’s concept of the abject and the “immemorial violence with which a body becomes separated from another body in order to be.”

<sup>3</sup> Worth mentioning is that this idea of the vanishing mediator in the mythic origins of the United States is not merely present in the Puritans and the Founding Fathers. Another popular myth is that of Christopher Columbus’ discovery of America. This too has violent foundations that are effaced from the American cultural psyche. For instance, Christopher Columbus was on a conqueror’s quest as he wrote in his journal about the Arawak people: “They . . . brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and

many other things, which they exchanged for the glass beads and hawks' bells. They willingly traded everything they owned. . . . They were well-built, with good bodies and handsome features. . . . They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are made of cane. . . . They would make fine servants. . . . With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want." This was the beginning of the slaughter and enslavement of Native American populations. For a further account, see Zinn, Howard. (1980). A People's History of the United States. New York: Harper & Row.

<sup>4</sup> Other terms used to describe the "illegal immigrant" as the abstract enemy other include: "Brown Tide Rising," "Sea of Brown Faces," "Foreigners Flooding the Country," "Third World Takeover," and "State of Seige." For a more detailed account of these enemy metaphors, see Santa Ana (2002).

<sup>5</sup> Of course, the current study of the cultural psyche suggests, unlike this quotation, that the shift did not occur overnight—the "shift" was merely the projection of an already existent cultural fantasy into reality (again).

<sup>6</sup> This analysis is related to the idea of the scapegoated "enemy" in chapter three in the section on "Purpose, the Unconscious, and Responsibility." The construction of "enemy" is also parallel to the concept of abject as discussed in chapter five.

<sup>7</sup> The Canadian illegal immigrant is most often the target of angst over the loss of technology jobs for American workers.

<sup>8</sup> This idea creates the potential for Mexico being included in the “axis of evil” since they can be argued to harbor terrorists and allow them to leave through their border with the U.S.

<sup>9</sup> The concept of Lacan’s objet petit a is discussed as a critical term overlapping and extending upon Burke’s seventh variety of the Unconscious as the category of “intuition.” This discussion may be found in chapter three. It may also be found in conjunction with Burke’s concepts of “hierarchy” and “perfection” in chapter four.

<sup>10</sup> Worth noting here is that, while many of the terms from Lacanian scholarship are used to analyze the particular clusters, the identification of terms surrounding each of these major terms in the cultural psyche is uniquely from Burke’s method of cluster analysis.

<sup>11</sup> This idea is arguably what happens when the U.S. helps to construct Afghanistan and the Taliban and then goes to war with the nation when it challenges U.S. hegemony. This is also the case with the U.S. support of Iraq in the Iraq-Iran, and then in the post-war period Iraq became a threat to U.S. hegemony by invading Kuwait, the U.S. went to war.

<sup>12</sup> The portrayal of the “illegal immigrant” as a kidnapper and a hostage taker is congruent with the “alien abduction” narrative in the “alien(iz)ation of the illegal immigrant” section of this chapter.

<sup>13</sup> The figure of restoration of order in is also discussed in terms of the Lacanian Unconscious in chapter two regarding the scope of the excesses of “evil” as it pertains to

rational-conscious rhetoric. Crime also may allude to the “horror-excess” of the Real that prevents the symbol from becoming itself (this is also found in chapter two). There is also a discussion of the relationship between the *objets petit a* and their status as excessive figures—when the Other has a privileged relationship to the objet petit a, you can most often find the label of “crime” in the symbolic (this may be found in chapter three).

<sup>14</sup> I use the phrase “bodies that matter” in terms of an ethics of bodies that matter that Judith Butler speaks of.

<sup>15</sup> The term “bare life” here is borrowed from Agamben (1998).

<sup>16</sup> Formerly known as the Immigration Naturalization Service (INS).

<sup>17</sup> In chapter three, I discuss the concept of the “symbolic Real” as it pertains to Burke’s fifth variety of the Unconscious as the deployment of logical conclusions not yet realized.

<sup>18</sup> This is influenced by Judith Butler’s ethics of bodies that matter. The body does matter in a colloquial sense.

<sup>19</sup> State and federal institutions hold the place of the “pure signifier” as the “quilting point,” also known as the “Name-of-the-Father,” and the “point de caption.” These theoretical terms are all discussed in terms of BurkeLacanian theory in chapter four.

<sup>20</sup> There is an interesting ethos involved in this claim. Doctors claim that illegal immigration needs to be curbed because they spread diseases, while they also argue that the “illegal immigrant” is forcing hospitals to shut down across the country because of



their cost. A Marxist suspicion might thus question the credibility of the disease claim since there is an economic motivation for hospitals to want tighter immigration restrictions.

<sup>21</sup> Apparently they “belong” in Third World countries.

<sup>22</sup> The idea of “dis-ease” as “dis-order” in the BurkeLacanian perspective is talked about in chapter two regarding the repressive state apparatus. It is also discussed in chapter four under Burke’s fourth characteristic of the human as “goaded by the spirit of hierarchy.”

<sup>23</sup> Again, this idea of the objet petit a is talked about in relation to Burke’s seventh variety of the Unconscious regarding “intuition.”

<sup>24</sup> The idea of Burkeian “hierarchy” is discussed in chapter three under the second variety of the Unconscious. Hierarchy rest on a certain distance from the objet petit a, and is also tied to the concept of the “repressive” negative.

<sup>25</sup> The denigration of Canadian illegal immigrants is more common from textual fragments gathered from the Northeast portion of the United States.

<sup>26</sup> The concept of the passage a l’acte is discussed in chapter three regarding Burke’s example of the computer failing in its animality. When the computer’s symbolic is deadlocked, it freezes. When the human’s symbolic is deadlocked, the condition of possibility for lashing out violently (or “passing to the Act”) is present.

<sup>27</sup> A more extensive analysis of the “border” occurs under the “American” ideograph (the first ideograph analyzed in this chapter).

<sup>28</sup> The Ku Klux Klan might thus be categorized as a “terrorist organization” which also has broad implications about how the U.S. conceptualizes “terrorism” in the war against terrorism.

<sup>29</sup> The trick of course, is that the person who is not racist would probably never tell a racist joke to begin with since it wouldn’t be funny. Moreover, the person of a different race may say and act as if they are not insulted when they may actually feel insulted. Moreover, there is always the possibility of the person not actually feeling insulted but *acting* as though they are insulted. Thus, to objectively measure in language whether the joke is meant in a racist way is impossible—it must be “known” by the individual subjects, not in language or action.

<sup>30</sup> “God’s Spirit” is a pivotal principle to this part of the Ideographic Cluster Quilt. The Lacanian “Name-of-the-Father” (Master signifier) as discussed in chapter four is the point that quilts the Symbolic field together. When the fundamental fantasy supporting “God” fails, “God” fails as a Master signifier as well. The “spirit” of “God” is thus necessary to reconstitute it in the Symbolic.

<sup>31</sup> This mantra should not be taken to mean that the struggle for environmental protection is incompatible with global capital. On the contrary, environmental solutions are perfectly within the realm of global capitalism in the sense that the best product/commodity to protect the environment becomes marketable once the environment is placed within the realm of desire for a commodity to fulfill the function.

The danger is thus that to “act globally, act locally” may persist within the norms global capital exploitation if uncritical of commodity fetishism at the heart of global capitalism.

<sup>32</sup> The “illegal immigrant” is surely in the domain of the Symbolic and the Imaginary. However, the “illegal immigrant” is symbolized only insofar as it is a figure that is “outside” symbolic order. The “illegal immigrant” thus is a perfect candidate as a scapegoat for disrupting symbolic order when the symbolic order is threatened.

<sup>33</sup> This is a good example of how money is taken from the U.S. taxpayer, and allocated to global corporations who are exempt from nation-state ties so that the money given to the corporation may be used in pursuit of globalization.

<sup>34</sup> The Affirmative Action and Diversity Project identified the scapegoating of the illegal immigrant as occurring simultaneously with the stagnation of working class wages and the decline in union participation: “Undocumented immigration has seen a sharp, steady increase over the last ten years only. For the fifteen years prior, the total number of undocumented immigrants fluxed up and down between 2.5 and 5 million people. The stagnation of wages and earnings of the working class has been steady since before the Regan administration. In other words, looking at the last 25 years, one does not find a correlation between the stagnation of the working class's wages/earnings and the number of undocumented workers entering the U.S. What has been consistent over the period of working class wage/earning stagnation has been the rise in the wealth of the top income earners in the U.S (those in the top 5% of wage/earning power). The U.S. has transformed into hourglass economy in which more workers are earning less and the top

earners are gaining income and wealth at a striking rate. In assessing the wage/earning power of the working class, it is also important to note the decline in union participation over the 25 year period. There appears to be a correlation between the decline in union participation and the stagnation of the working class's wage/earning power. (Source: U. S. Census Data). Available at <http://aad.english.ucsb.edu/econimpacts.html>.

<sup>35</sup> For instance, see Gunn, Joshua. (2004). "The Rhetoric of Exorcism: George W. Bush and the Return of Political Demonology." Western Journal of Communication. 68.1. (Winter, 2004): 1-23. See also Gunn, Joshua. (2006). "Mourning Speech: Haunting and the Spectral Voices of Nine-Eleven." Text and Performance Quarterly. 24.2. (July, 2006): 91-114.

<sup>36</sup> The "syntagmatic pole" may also be thought of as the grammatical structure, whereas the "paradigmatic pole" may be thought of as the example or pattern.

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Conclusion**

This dissertation has offered a BurkeLacanian rhetorical theory and method of criticism. The broad argument of the dissertation was that the theorization of a BurkeLacanian subject creates a condition of possibility for rhetorical criticism to account for the (in)stability of symbolic order. The (in)stability of symbolic order is accounted for in the BurkeLacanian concept of the Unconscious that acts on the Symbolic by way of ruptures. The symbolic order, therefore, is always already the condition of possibility for symbolic dis-order—not just in the binary negative symbolic sense of the term, but because of “another scene” that is Unconscious in the psyche. The trajectory of this dissertation has demonstrated the constitutive features of a BurkeLacanian psyche and how such features may be used in a method of rhetorical critique.

### **REVIEW OF CHAPTERS**

Chapter one introduced the basic Freudian influence on Burke’s work as well as the overarching structure of the dissertation. Chapter two provided a justification for the theoretical importance of the Unconscious to rhetorical studies. The BurkeLacanian approach is but one area of a more general landscape of rhetorical studies to which the Unconscious is a valuable site of study. What I have done in this dissertation is to provide an example for what kind of work may be done to establish the Unconscious as a critical category in other rhetorical perspectives. For instance, it is entirely possible for an

AristotleLacanian method to be developed that may have additional benefits to an Aristotelian rhetorical method especially in terms of the categories of desire and enjoyment (as Lacanian scholarship talks about them) as rhetorical factors.<sup>1</sup>

In chapter three, I argued that Lacanian scholarship on the Unconscious offers a descriptive update to the “Dramatistic dictionary” that decreases the vagueness of Burke’s lexicon about the Unconscious. In order to demonstrate this argument, I detailed the contributions that Lacanian scholarship has to offer Burke’s eight varieties of the Unconscious, as well as the Lacanian alterations to Burke’s articulation of the action/motion distinction, and the concept of the negative. I also utilized Lacanian scholarship to further implicate Burke’s discussion of the relationship between purpose, the Unconscious, and responsibility in the context of political drama.<sup>2</sup> When an obscene dimension always already supplements a political “decision,” there exists a fundamental impossibility of repressing intentionality of the obscene dimension if understood in a BurkeLacanian pretext. The obscene dimension of ideology is always at root in the textual formations of fragments since such fragments are always formed around various figures of abjection in a psyche.

Chapter four argued that using the resources offered by Lacanian scholarship to analyze the influence of Freud and Marx on Burke’s theory of Dramatism helps to clarify a BurkeLacanian subject that introduces a more critical vocabulary to approach questions of desire and enjoyment as political and rhetorical factors in rhetorical theory and criticism. In order to introduce such a critical vocabulary, I examined both the Burkeian and the Lacanian conceptualizations of the human subject and then articulated the

fundamental features that borrow from each of their concepts—the borrowing from each formed a new concept that I call the BurkeLacanian subject.<sup>3</sup> The critical Dramatistic distinction made by the BurkeLacanian subject is that the Real acts, the Imaginary and Symbolic move.<sup>4</sup>

Chapter five began the process of putting the BurkeLacanian theorization of this dissertation into the service of rhetorical critique. In this chapter, I presented a definition of rhetorical criticism as not only involving the learning of something new, but learning the “disturbing side” of something we knew all along. Rhetorical criticism is, therefore, fundamentally a critique of ideology since the “disrupting” or “disturbing side” of texts is intricately intertwined with the power of the text. In order to articulate this idea in the context of a BurkeLacanian method, I provided the constitutive features of analyzing a “text as cultural psyche” that forms “Ideographic Cluster Quilts” around figures of abjection. Analyzing Ideographic Cluster Quilting provides a method that allows for the articulation of desire and enjoyment as rhetorical factors in a cultural psyche.

In order to demonstrate the BurkeLacanian method for studying Ideographic Cluster Quilts, chapter six analyzed the fragments that form around the figure of the “illegal immigrant” as abject. This chapter both traced the “illegal immigrant” slave trade and identified the Ideographic Cluster Quilt that both sustains and is sustained by the repulsion of the “illegal immigrant.” The cluster ideographic quilt revealed that the cultural psyche believes that the “illegal immigrant” is a “polluting” “diseased” “sinning” “un-American” “criminal” “enemy” “alien” “breeding” “beast” “piece of shit” “(insert racial expletive)” who “free-rides” off the system and is “damaging the economy.” The

“illegal immigrant” is an ideograph in the sense that it is a stable term that supplements the nationalistic ideographs such as “American,” “Freedom,” etc. Yet, the “illegal immigrant” is an abject ideograph since it will always be defined as the violation of the symbolic law. Thus, the obscene supplement to the official discourse of the “illegal immigrant” is the horrific material violence inflicted on the bodies of “illegal immigrants” because they do not ethically “matter” in any official sense.

I conclude this dissertation with three areas of discussion. In the first part of this chapter, I will revisit the research questions of the dissertation to explain the way a BurkeLacanian theory may address such questions. Second, I will explore some ideas for the development of additional BurkeLacanian methods. The exploration will scratch the surface<sup>5</sup> of future BurkeLacanian methodological possibilities by briefly introducing “Evental Pentadic Criticism,” “the BurkeLacanian Rhetorical Situation,” “Neo-Aristotelian BurkeLacanian Criticism,” “Homological Cultural Psyches,” and “Static Signifiers in the Cultural Psyche.” Finally, the last area of this chapter will explain some additional implications for the current study of BurkeLacanian methods. This last area will delve into potential connections between Burkeian and Lacanian terminology that have evaded the focus of this dissertation on the BurkeLacanian subject and Unconscious. The last section will also include a discussion of the idea of the conditions for a “critical self-reflexivity” in BurkeLacanian methods, a short discussion on BurkeLacanian dialectics, a brief exploration in the possibility of an “ethics of motives,” and the “form/content” distinction for political agency.



## THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS REVISITED

Central to the BurkeLacanian theory advanced in this dissertation is the dialectic between the Symbolic and Imaginary, and the Real. While there have been a wide range of terms introduced into a BurkeLacanian vocabulary, the introduction of the Real as a dialectical component to the Symbolic and Imaginary is a unique contribution to contemporary rhetorical theory and criticism. Specifically, Gunn (2004) and Lundberg (2004) argued for the importance of the rhetorical study of the Imaginary and Symbolic registers. In these studies, the Real was posited as both a failure in the Symbolic and a failure in the Imaginary. What a BurkeLacanian theory of Dramatism contributes to these theories is the idea that the Real exists in a dialectical relation with the Symbolic and Imaginary whereby the Symbolic and Imaginary both succeed and fail. The Real is the very gap between success and failure of the Symbolic and Imaginary, and is therefore the essence of conflict at the heart of rhetorical drama. The Real is a radical empty Void that must be repressed for there to be a Symbolic and Imaginary. Thus, the Unconscious is of principle interest to a BurkeLacanian rhetorical approach and frames the way we are able to address the research questions.

### **RQ1: How can we theorize the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor?**

Throughout this dissertation, there have been many characteristics that have been described in order to move toward a theorization of the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor. The basic theme running through all such characteristics is that the Unconscious is a rhetorical factor precisely because it establishes the necessity/inevitability of a “re-action” that is a fundamental characteristic of rhetoric. If rhetoric is fundamentally

concerned with probable truths, then the Unconscious may be thought of as the storage container for material that poses a constant threat to probable truths. By posing such a consistent threat, the Unconscious is a rhetorical factor because it calls forth a rhetorical response. In other words, we can theorize the Unconscious as the Real of rhetoric since rhetoric is constituted by the Imaginary and Symbolic registers in the psyche. The BurkeLacanian psyche formulates the Unconscious as a rhetorical factor because the psyche *uses* symbols as a defense against encountering the Real, and the Imaginary plays a central role in the *inventing* of Symbols because of the consistent threat of the Real. The dialectic between conscious and Unconscious is at the core of rhetorical drama. As such, the Unconscious is the very pre-condition for the necessarily rhetorical aspect of the human condition.

**RQ2: How is Burke's theory of the Unconscious rhetorically useful?**

Burke theorized both the conscious and the Unconscious as important characteristics of his Dramatistic theory. The conscious and Unconscious parts of the psyche exist in dialectical opposition to each other and form the psychic fuel for a language as symbolic action. Through this dialectical relation, Burke located the Unconscious outside of the symbolic yet inside the scope of Dramatism. The major reason that Burke's theory of the Unconscious is rhetorically useful is that he canonized the Unconscious to provide a critical lexicon for rhetorical scholars to articulate the features that lie beyond the symbolic that may nonetheless have a direct influence on the symbolic. Chapters three and four suggested a few of the following specific reasons that Burke's canonization of the Unconscious may help rhetorical scholars: (1) the

Unconscious operation of the physiological processes of the body exist outside the symbolic and may influence the lexical development of a “rhetoric of the body”—when biological process go awry in the body, we are able to develop a more specific rhetorical vocabulary as a response to such failures,<sup>6</sup> (2) the various conflicts that stem from Unconscious “subpersonalities” help to articulate both the developmental features of rhetorical personas and the necessary preconditions for Burke’s concept of the guilt cycle where rhetoric seeks to “purify” the conflicts between the conscious and Unconscious, (3) the Unconscious assists in the articulation of a fidelity to a particular logos—just as Euclid was Unconscious of the extent of his geometric definitions and axioms, so too might we understand the Unconscious counterpart of logos as the pre-condition for a rhetoric that responds by further developing the logos, and (4) the Unconscious advances the concept of decorum since it is the realm that exists outside the symbolic that is beckoned forth through tropes and figures that function to arouse expectations of a person—this is the connection between rhetoric and poetics as the symbolic articulation of loss that gives rise to pleasure.

**RQ3: How is a theory of the BurkeLacanian subject rhetorically useful?**

The BurkeLacanian subject is rhetorically useful because it situates the rhetoric of consciousness in dialectical relation with the Unconscious that exists in a psyche. The basic BurkeLacanian Dramatistic distinction is that the Real acts, the Imaginary and Symbolic move. The BurkeLacanian subject is motivated by the dynamically irreducible motivational loci of action (the Real) and motion (the Symbolic and Imaginary)—both of which reside in the psyche. The important supplement to this basic distinction is the

additional complication by which the Symbolic and Imaginary act on the Real through repression. The critical assumption to be understood in the basic BurkeLacanian distinction is that the Real does not move—it is the kernel that rhetoric is constructed around. This basic distinction forms the basis by which we are able to mediate between discursivity and materiality by articulating the excesses of ideology that are manifest in both discursive and material ways. Such an articulation stems from the introduction of the dialectic of desire (on the side of the Symbolic and Imaginary) and enjoyment (on the side of the Real) into a Dramatistic vocabulary. Thus, the BurkeLacanian subject is rhetorically useful because it offers a theory of the psyche to advance a theory of motives that includes desire and enjoyment as political and rhetorical factors in a Dramatistic theory.

**RQ4: How does a BurkeLacanian theory of the Unconscious inform productive criticism?**

As demonstrated in chapters five and six of this dissertation, a BurkeLacanian theory of the Unconscious informs productive criticism by introducing the concept of the Real to rhetorical methodology.<sup>7</sup> In a BurkeLacanian theory, the Symbolic is situated against an external violent (Real) content so that “in the symbolic order ‘time runs backwards’; the ‘symbolic efficiency’ consists in a continuous ‘rewriting of its own past,’ in including past signifying traces in new contexts which retrospectively change their meaning” (Žižek, 2002a, pp. 201-202). The Real is atemporal—it is the realm of utter meaninglessness against which the Symbolic is located. The category of the Real thus infuses rhetorical criticism with a certain disturbing side of rhetorical texts. Chapter five

of this dissertation reminded us of Wilson's (2003) description of the way rhetorical critics "engage in a magical performance to transform the invisible into the visible, to disrupt and reorient established habits of sight" (p. 7). By introducing the category of the Real into rhetorical criticism, BurkeLacanian theory informs productive rhetorical criticism by challenging rhetorical critics to move beyond making the invisible side of texts visible. A BurkeLacanian theory informs productive criticism by requiring the rhetorical critic to specifically interrogate the (Real) disturbing side of rhetorical texts. Moreover, there are many future BurkeLacanian methodological possibilities that offer potential contributions to productive criticism.

#### **FUTURE BURKELACANIAN METHODOLOGICAL POSSIBILITIES**

There are at least five approaches to rhetorical criticism that may be further developed from a BurkeLacanian perspective.<sup>8</sup> The first approach is what I call "Evental Pentadic Criticism." This approach to rhetorical criticism features Badiou's concept of the "Event" as the foundation for a Burkeian pentadic criticism that infuses Lacanian scholarship into the Burkeian pentadic ratios. Badiou's concept of the "Event" is not an "ordinary event" but rather "a totally disruptive occurrence which has no place in the scheme of things as they currently are" (Feltham & Clemens, 2003, p. 27). Badiou may be characterized as a Lacanian scholar in the sense that his concept of the Event may be credited to his reliance on the Lacanian idea of an encounter with the Real. Badiou's (2002) discussion of "the subject" is conceptually the same as Lacan's: "whatever convokes someone to the composition of a subject is something extra, something that happens in situations as something that they and the usual way of behaving in them

cannot account for. Let us say a *subject*, which goes beyond the animal needs something to have happened, something that cannot be reduced to its ordinary inscription in ‘what there is.’ Let us call this *supplement* an *event*” (p. 41).

For Badiou (2006), the Event is part of a larger set that constitutes human being. A “site” is the “ontological material” that is made up distinctly of a “pure indistinct being, which is the void proper to life (and the void proper to life, as death shows, is matter)” (p. 101). The concept of the “site” may thus create a new theorization of an ontology of a Burkeian “scene” in the Dramatistic pentad. The Burkeian “act” may be further articulated as the Lacanian “passage a l’acte” that forms a Badiouian Event. The BurkeLacanian theorization may also collapse the distinction between act and agency in the pentad since the “passage a l’acte” is the very means (agency) for the traversal of a fundamental fantasy that makes the Burkeian “scene” appear radically different. The “agent” may be thought of in terms of the BurkeLacanian divided subject. Of course, within the BurkeLacanian Evental Pentad, the “purpose” would be constituted by the dialectic of desire and enjoyment. Finally, the Burkeian pentadic ratios may be treated in terms of “mathematical set theory” that is the center of Badiou’s philosophical inquiry (the “agent-agency,” “act-purpose,” etc. ratios as “mathematical sets” of a drama).

A second potential BurkeLacanian method may be an interrogation of the “BurkeLacanian Rhetorical Situation.” Bitzer (1968) defined the rhetorical situation as “a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant

modification of the exigence” (p. 4). Given the articulation of a BurkeLacanian subject in this dissertation, an analysis of the rhetorical situation may be rooted in the same justification that Biesecker (1989) advanced while using Derrida’s thematic of “difference” to rethink the rhetorical situation: “if any symbolic act is no more than an event that links distinct and already constituted subjects, then rhetorical discourse bumps up against the impenetrable and unalterable space of the subject” (p. 110). The idea of the rhetorical situation, as conceived by Bitzer, has three specific interesting intersections with BurkeLacanian theory: (1) Barry Brummett has argued that the rhetorical situation may be accounted for within the Burkeian pentadic “scene”<sup>9</sup>—an idea that may parallel the Evental “site” as the ontological basis of the scene, and by extension the rhetorical situation, (2) the BurkeLacanian “text as cultural psyche” that forms around the “Event” as the exigence of a rhetorical situation, and (3) the repressive function of discourse that “modifies the exigence” of the rhetorical situation. All of these intersections may be further investigated so as to develop a more thoroughly BurkeLacanian concept of the rhetorical situation.

Another BurkeLacanian method that may be developed is a Neo-Aristotelian BurkeLacanian criticism. In describing the necessary features of a neo-Aristotelian critical method, Brockriede (1966) wrote that the critic must “revise the Aristotelian description of the kinds of occasions in which rhetorical events take place. He must concern himself with the interaction of speaker and audience as well as with the discourse itself. He must describe how speakers relate to their various audiences in status. Such observations. . . may explain how ideas are adjusted to people and people to ideas” (p.

37). The first task for the critic is to establish the “context” within which a rhetorical speech is delivered to an audience. As established in this dissertation in chapter five, BurkeLacanian context is a larger “super-structural” context of the cultural psyche that precedes the given speech.

The second task for the Neo-Aristotelian BurkeLacanian critic involves the usage of BurkeLacanian theory to examine the five Aristotelian canons: (1) invention (inartistic proofs, artistic proofs—ethos/pathos/logos), (2) organization (the structure of the language), (3) style (visual presentation and figural use of language), (4) memory (mastery of the subject material), and (5) delivery (mode of presentation). The specific BurkeLacanian terms that may be used to create a BurkeLacanian Neo-Aristotelian critical investigation include: (1) invention as the work of fantasy (that sustains the ideas of inartistic and artistic proofs), (2) organization as the relation of signifiers in an Ideographic Cluster Quilt, (3) style as principally the domain of the Imaginary as it is hooked on the Symbolic, and in relation to style being moved by the Real (the BurkeLacanian distinction that the Real acts, the Imaginary and Symbolic move), (4) memory as an expanded concept pertaining to the relation between the “forgetting” of the content of the cultural psyche in the rhetor’s text (a comparison between those things featured in the cultural psyche that are absent in the specific text), (5) delivery as related to the BurkeLacanian seventh variety of the Unconscious of intuition’s relation to the *objet petit a*.

The final task for the Neo-Aristotelian BurkeLacanian critic is to analyze the effect of the rhetor in accomplishing their purpose. While purpose may be run through



the dialectic of desire and enjoyment, the term “effect” presupposes a type of causality. For Aristotle, there were four types of causality: (1) material cause (out of which a thing comes to be—substance, matter), (2) formal cause (form, archetype, shape), (3) efficient cause (source or maker or change or cessation of change, maker, agent), and (4) final cause (for the sake of which, end, purpose). Benoit (1983) explained these types of causes as corresponding to Burke’s terms in the pentad: (1) scene as related to material cause, (2) agent as efficient cause, (3) purpose as final cause, (4) act as formal cause, and (5) agency with efficient cause. The Neo-Aristotelian BurkeLacanian critic may bridge these types of cause and the pentad with a conceptualization of the Unconscious by beginning with Aristotle’s On Prophetic Dreams that I discussed briefly in chapter two.

A fourth BurkeLacanian rhetorical method that may be developed is an analysis of Homological Cultural Psyches. Chapter five briefly discussed Brummett’s (2004) work on rhetorical homologies as it pertains to the method of Ideographic Cluster Quilting. Building upon this analysis, the analysis of Homological Cultural Psyches would involve a BurkeLacanian critique of (un)seemingly different (depending on perspective) cultural psyches that are formed around the same and/or different figures of abjection. This type of criticism may provoke a type of method for inter-cultural rhetorical critique.

Finally, a fifth rhetorical method that may be further developed is the BurkeLacanian analysis of Static Signifiers in the Cultural Psyche. Static signifiers are signifiers that both maintain power in a cultural psyche and serve to obfuscate potential meanings that are homologically related to the signifier. These signifiers are most often

preceded by the word “the” as a symptom of a hegemonic meaning of the static signifier in a cultural signifier. For instance, chapter six of this dissertation alluded to the existence of a contemporary slave trade in the form of the illegal immigrant trade. Further evidence of a contemporary slave trade exists in the work of Kevin Bales.<sup>10</sup> When the signifier “slave trade” appears in the cultural psyche, it most often appears with the term “the” that precedes it—as in “the slave trade.” The function of this signifier is to historicize “a” slave trade as a thing that happened in “the history” of the “the United States.” Utilizing BurkeLacanian theory to approach the criticism of such static signifiers serves to reinvigorate the “vanishing mediator” and thus create a sense of urgency regarding the hegemonic nature of static signifiers.<sup>11</sup>

## **CONCLUDING IMPLICATIONS**

Having perused the potential contributions of a BurkeLacanian theory to various rhetorical methods, I would like to conclude with a few implications of the overall trajectory of this dissertation. One implication is that having analyzed the contributions that Lacanian scholarship has to offer Burke’s Freudian influenced rhetorical theory, we begin to understand Burke differently by placing a distinct role of the Unconscious in public dramas. Specifically, such Lacanian scholarship suggests that Dramatism is better equipped with language to analyze desire and enjoyment as rhetorical factors in a cultural psyche that is part of a larger political drama. While interrogating the Unconscious as an important factor in a BurkeLacanian theory, there are still many connections that may be made to the further development of BurkeLacanian scholarship. These concepts are

included in Table One at the end of this dissertation. By drawing these connections, we will be able to develop a richer lexicon as instruments for rhetorical critique.

Another implication concerns the critical reflexivity of a BurkeLacanian theory. In a very similar fashion to Freud who wrote many of his theories based on self-examination, Burke and Lacan perform their own self reflexivity in the “sense” that they use a theory of the Symbolic while writing within the Symbolic space of book, journal, and published lectures. Thus, the reality of a BurkeLacanian method is always already double. For example, the BurkeLacanian lexicon may be a critical dictionary by which to develop a perspective to analyze Ideographic Cluster Quilts, and in the very process of developing a BurkeLacanian critique the critic may establish a symbolic order of perspective that continually needs additional *points de capiton* to stabilize the method. In this way, the BurkeLacanian critical method is confined to the world of the Symbolic if it is to remain in the domain of academic writing. As such, it will be open to the “gaps” produced in the Symbolic that will require the BurkeLacanian critic to both quilt the Symbolic aspects of method while at the same time utilizing the methods as a grid for the articulation of desire and enjoyment as rhetorical and political factors of criticism.

This dissertation may also serve as a starting point for discussion about the nature and scope of Burkeian scholarship, Lacanian scholarship, and BurkeLacanian theory as they pertain to the theorization of dialectical inquiry. Overington (1977) described the Burkeian dialectic as a “conversation of many voices, each having its place and its perspective, no voice supplanting another: it is the dialogue as a whole, the voices of *harmony* and *discord*, which is the end of the dialectic.” He continued, “There is here no

question of a synthesis as the culmination of the dialectic; . . . it is only the multiplicity of elements in the dialectic which offers an accurate account” (pp. 136-137). The principle dialectic of Lacanian scholarship pertains to the dialectic of desire and enjoyment. We can recall Žižek’s (1997) explanation of this dialectic noted in chapter four of this dissertation: “desire and *jouissance* are inherently antagonistic, even exclusive: desire’s *raison d’être* (or ‘utility function,’ to use Richard Dawkin’s term) is not to realize its goal, to find full satisfaction, but to reproduce itself as desire. . . . It is the famous Lacanian *objet petit a* that mediates between the incompatible domains of desire and *jouissance*” (39). To what extent do the “harmony and discord” of the Burkeian dialectic relate to the “desire and *jouissance*” of Lacanian scholarship? Perhaps the answer is to say that desire is to discord as enjoyment is to harmony. Further scholarship may articulate the advantages of conceptualizing the BurkeLacanian dialectic by exploring both its nature and scope.

This dissertation may also serve as a starting place for a conversation on BurkeLacanian ethics. Crusius (2006) noted that “at one point in his career, Burke planned to write an Ethics of Motives.” Crusius (2006) advanced three “problems” with developing a Burkeian theory of ethics: (1) Burke wrote very little explicit material about ethics so the person who would write “An Ethics of Motives” would have to range “far beyond what Burke said,” (2) There are too many schools of thought about ethical philosophy from which to get help from, and (3) The things Burke did say about ethics do not help very much in forming a comprehensive Burkeian theory of an ethics of motives. The first “problem” is concerned with a dogmatic approach to Burke—to be “true” to his

word. The implicit concern here is moving beyond a fundamentalist interpretation of Burke by expanding beyond the scripture he has written. The second “problem” is the fear of getting into a “messy” debate about the ethics of Burkeian thought (better to trudge along and not risk the dirty work). The third “problem” is also expressed in a dogmatic theme that seeks to work within the confines of the little work that Burke produced on ethics.

The way out of these concerns is to risk impiety in the face of Burke. That is, one should not be so concerned with the question “did Burke say X or Y so that we may discern an ethics of motives that is true to his thought,” but rather “what are the advantages of X or Y theory of ethics if they are used as an ethics of motives in Burkeian scholarship?” To answer this question, a BurkeLacanian theory may invigorate a debate regarding the constitutive features of an ethics of motives. There are at least three places to begin such a conversation: (1) Lacan’s (1997) Seminar VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis placed his idea of love “at the center of ethical experience” and the ideals of “authenticity” and “non-dependence” at the perimeter of love (pp. 8-10), (2) Žižek’s (2004c) “A Plea for Ethical Violence”<sup>12</sup> where he reached a “radical anti-Levinasian conclusion: the true ethical step is the one *beyond* the face of the other, the one of suspending the hold of the face—the choice against the face—the choice against the face, for the Third” (p. 88), (3) Zupančič’s (2000) Ethics of the Real where she advanced the idea that, “An ethics of the Real is not an ethics oriented towards the Real, but an attempt to rethink ethics by recognizing and acknowledging the dimension of the Real (in the Lacanian sense of the term) as it is already operative in ethics. . . . [E]thics is by nature

excessive” (p. 4). These three works are by no means a manifesto on ethics. However, read in tandem with a BurkeLacanian theory we should risk the encounter with a “messy debate on ethics,” especially as it pertains to BurkeLacanian theories of the Unconscious, subjectivity, and methods of criticism. Having laid out a BurkeLacanian theory and criticism, this dissertation may serve as the starting place for such an investigation.

Finally, having reviewed some of the potential BurkeLacanian methods as well as some implications to current and future research, I would like to conclude with a short note on a BurkeLacanian distinction between “form” and “content.” Žižek (2002b) wrote that, “what is really at stake in ideology is its form, the fact that we continue to walk as straight as we can in one direction, that we follow even the most dubious opinions once our minds have been made up regarding them” (p. 84). The analysis of the BurkeLacanian concept of the “cultural psyche” reveals that, although the form is certainly a stake in ideology, what is *really* at stake in ideology is its content. In other words, what is at stake is the enactment of horrific trauma on figures of excess that sustain the ideology of a cultural psyche. The rhetorical critic, therefore, must see through the form of ideology to delve into the depths of the Unconscious in the cultural psyche where such content threatens the stability of conscious form. This is the task of the rhetorical critic—to make the invisible visible by bringing the Unconscious disturbing side of textual formations into cultural consciousness.

## NOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

<sup>1</sup> This is especially possible given Aristotle's On Prophetic Dreams that I discussed in chapter two.

<sup>2</sup> For instance, see the discussion of “collateral damage” and intentionality in chapter two.

<sup>3</sup> Remember, the BurkeLacanian subject is not properly Burkeian or Lacanian. Rather, it is a merging and diverging subject that is influenced out of each of their thought.

<sup>4</sup> Notice this is a departure from both Lacan and Burke. For Burke, the symbolic acts. Lacan does not make a distinction between action/motion at all—the psychic totality acts and moves at the same time.

<sup>5</sup> There are undoubtedly many more potential BurkeLacanian methods that may be developed. I choose to highlight these here to show some of the more obvious connections that I found in the research for this dissertation.

<sup>6</sup> As an example of a “rhetoric of the body,” Düttman (1996) presented an attempt to find a philosophical language in order to do justice to the singularity of lived experience in the shadow of AIDS.

<sup>7</sup> Including, but not limited to, the Burkeian Dramatistic rhetorical method that is the focus of this dissertation.

<sup>8</sup> Each of the methods that follow will be able to draw upon the vast terminology advanced in the theorization of the BurkeLacanian Unconscious and subject.

<sup>9</sup> In a private conversation.

<sup>10</sup> For instance, see Bales, Kevin. (1999). Disposable People: New Slavery in the Global Economy. Berkeley: U of California P. See also, Bales, Kevin. (2005). Understanding Global Slavery: A Reader. Berkeley: U of California P.

<sup>11</sup> This quite obviously has to do with both the reclamation of the “forgotten” aspects of history and memory as well as being able to acknowledge the traumatic aspects of such history that has still yet to be “re-solved” (since there was no real solution to begin with—merely a repression). The concept of the vanishing mediator may be found in chapter five.

<sup>12</sup> Also of interest is Badiou, Alain. (2002). Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil. New York: Verso. I did not include it here because if we were to really interrogate Žižek’s essay, we would encounter this work since Žižek has an entire section on “Judith Butler as the Anti-Badiou.”



**Table One: Major BurkeLacanian Terms**

<b>Burkeian Concept</b>	<b>Lacanian Scholarship Supplement/Alteration</b>
Conflict as the Essence of Drama	Repression as the essence of conflict
"Man" as Creator of the Negative	The negative just as much the creator of "man"
The "Abyss"	The Void of subjectivity
Act	Authentic act, passage a l'acte
Agent	Barred subject
Agency	Traversal of the fantasy, overidentification
Scene	Psychic scene of Imaginary, Symbolic, Real
Purpose	Dialectic of desire and enjoyment
Motives	Drive
Nature of Ritual and Myth	Fantasmic and Symbolic screens
Casuistic Stretching	Free association of signifiers, vanishing mediator
Cluster Criticism	Ideographic Cluster Quilting
Identification/Cons substantiality	Four types: Imaginary, Symbolic, Real, and "Over"
Imagery	Relation to fantasy, Symbolic castration
Perspective by Incongruity	The condition for Ideographic Cluster Quilting
Good and Evil	Fantasy of Good/Evil as protection from Real
Symbols of Authority	Master signifiers
Recalcitrance	The Real as recalcitrantly both inside and outside language
Scapegoat	Excess enjoyment, excremental function of fantasy
Occupational Psychosis	Stabilizing function and collapse of fantasy
Magic	Return of the Real, slips in fantasy space
Style	Fantasy identification, perceived as basically arbitrary
Piety	Symbolic identification, stabilizing function of Symbolic
Metaphor	Metaphoric condensation
Metonymy	Metonymic condensation
Synecdoche	Symptom, Sinthome
Irony	Conscious split between desire and "reality"
The Poetic	Symbolic articulation of loss, gives rise to pleasure
Mystification	Empty gesture making mystification possible
Terministic Screens	Sublimity that exceeds terministic screens
Logology	"Words about words" as Signifiers → Signifiers
Dialectic	Dialectic of desire and enjoyment
Form	Pleasure principle and desiring production
The Unconscious	As structured like a language
Nature of Art	Relying on distance toward fantasy
Guilt Cycle	Subtraction after fiasco of purification, Resistance to heroic
Hierarchy	Tarrying with the negative, obscene unwritten supplement
The Comedic	The Lacanian "joke," a "crack up" as symptom of Unconscious
Engine of Drama	<i>Objet Petit a</i>

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## Vita

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